This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 06823077 4

THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D.D.

VOLUME VIII.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR,

CONTAINING

A PARAPHRASE ON THE REMAINING PART

OF THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES;

THE EPISTLE OF

ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS;

AND PART OF HIS

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Εαν γαρ τινα [τινα] τη μιλα τυ προσεχειν αναγνωσει, ευ οιδ' οτι η Θαυμασεται τον νουν τυ ανδρ, (sc. Παυλυ,) εν ιδιωτικη λεξει μεγαλα περιεχοντ, η μη Θαυμασας ανθ καταγελας φανειται.

ORIGEN. con. CELS. Lib. III. Page 122. Cantab. 1658.

NEW-YORK LIBRARY. NEW-YORK.

LEEDS:

PRINTED BY EDWARD BAINES,

FOR THE EDITORS; CONDER, BUCKLERSBURY; BUTTON, PATERNOSTER-ROW; WILLIAMS, STATIONERS'-COURT; BAYNES, PATERNOSTER-ROW; OGLE, GREAT-TURN-STILE; NUNN, QUEEN-STREET; AND JONES, PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON; AND FOR BAINES, AND BINNS, LEEDS; COLBERT, DUBLIN; WILSON AND SPENCE, YORK; OGLE AND AIKMAN, EDINBURGH; M. OGLE, GLASGOW; CROOKES, ROTHERHAM; ABEL, NORTHAMPTON; AND MR. FARRAND, 185, MARKET-STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

1805.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

PREFACE *.

THE nature and design of this work, and the principles on which it hath been undertaken and conducted, have been so largely represented in the preceding volumes, that it is unnecessary here to enlarge upon them. But, as what I now present to the reader concludes the *historical part* of the *New Testament*, this seems a very proper place to recollect the promise which I long since made, of offering *some remarks on the excellence and usefulness of that history*, which may dispose the reader more frequently to review it, and to study it with the greater application.

It must be universally granted, that the *excellence* of any performance is to be estimated, by considering its *design*, and the degree in which it is *calculated to answer* it. The *design* of the *gospel history* is summed up in the words which I have placed for my *motto*; which, though they are taken from the conclusion of *St. John's* gospel, are applicable, not only to all the other *Evangelists*, but likewise to the *Acts of the Apostles*, that invaluable appendix to them *These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

I shall beg leave to shew, how admirably the *history* before us is *calculated to answer* both these ends, *viz.* to produce a *conviction* of the *truth of christianity*, and to make those *good impressions* on the heart, which may secure the *eternal life*, and happiness of the reader; which no speculative conviction, even of the most sublime, comprehensive, and important truths, will itself be able to do. I apprehend, that, in proportion to the degree in which these *two premises* can be illustrated, the *excellence* and value of *this history* will immediately appear; for no man is so far infatuated as to dispute, whether obtaining life, *eternal life*, be an end of the highest importance; how light soever he may in fact make of it, and how wantonly soever he may barter it away for every trifle, that strikes his imagination, or fires his passions. Obvious as the hints are which occur on these heads, I will touch a little upon them; that we may more evidently see, how much we are indebted to the Divine Wisdom and goodness in giving us so invaluable a treasure as *these books* contain, and how highly we are concerned to attend diligently to the contents of them.

First, Every intelligent reader of this *evangelical history*, must have seen, that it is admirably adapted to produce and support in all attentive and impartial minds a strong *conviction* of the *truth of christianity*, and by consequence of the divine glories of *Jesus the Christ*, as *the Son of God.*

It is evident, that our most material arguments for the demonstration of the *truth of christianity* are drawn from *miracles*, from *prophecies* from the *character of its founders*, and from the *genius of the religion itself.* Now though all these receive great illustration from the *epistolary parts* of the *New Testament*, and

* As the first edition was printed in Six Volumes, the Third Volume began with the first chapter of the Acts, and concluded with that book.

and some of them, especially the second, from the *Old*; yet it is certain, that the grand basis and foundation of them all is what we read in the *history of Christ* and his *apostles*. There we are informed of the *miracles* which they wrought, of the *character* they maintained, and of the *system of religion* which they published to the world; and the application of the *Old Testament prophecies* to *Jesus of Nazareth* is beyond all controversy to be justified chiefly from what we find there.

These books do in the most authentic manner, as we have demonstrated elsewhere, shew us, who *Jesus of Nazareth* was, and what he *professed himself* to be. They give us an account of the very high pretensions he made to an immediate mission from God, and to a most intimate relation to him, as *his Son* in a peculiar and appropriate sense not communicable to any other. They give us also, as in this connection it is very fit they should, a very large and circumstantial narration of a *variety of miracles which he wrought*. Their number appears to be very great; so that a late writer, who has considered them very accurately, reckons up *sixty-nine* relating to particular persons, besides *twenty* other instances, in all of which several, and in most of them multitudes, yea frequently *great multitudes*, are mentioned, not merely as the spectators, but as the objects of his miraculous power, which must on the most moderate computation arise to *many hundreds*; not to mention those yet *more numerous miracles* which were performed by his *apostles* in his name, wherever they came, especially after the descent of the *Holy Ghost* upon them; or the variety of *supernatural gifts* and *powers* with which they were endowed, and which in many thousands of instances they communicated to others.

It is farther to be recollected here, that these *miracles* were not of such a kind as to leave any room for a doubt, whether they lay within the natural efficacy of second causes, or not; since the most hopeless and inveterate *diseases* gave way, not merely to some trivial application of means, whether internal or external, but to *a touch*, or a *word*; and *death* itself obeyed the voice of *Jesus* and of his servants speaking by his authority.

Now I could wish that any one who feels himself inclined to *scepticism* with regard to *christianity*, would sit down and read over *any one of the evangelists* in this particular view: That he would take the stories of the several *miracles* in their succession, and after having attentively weighed them, would ask his own heart, whether, if he had seen such facts as these, he would not immediately have been convinced in his own conscience, that this was indeed the *seal of heaven* set to the commission of the person who performed them; and consequently, whether if these things were really done by *Jesus* and his *missionaries*, in his name, he must not be compelled to acknowledge, that *christianity is true*. Let any impartial and rational man in the world judge, whether if an *impostor* had arisen, falsely and blasphemously arrogating to himself the high titles of the *Son of God*, and *Saviour of men*, God would have honoured his lips with this wonderful power over diseases and death, or his dead body after a public execution with a resurrection: that is, in one word, whether he would have interposed to give *such credit to him*, as it is not pretended he hath ever given, in any other instance, to the best of men in the best of causes. Every man's heart will surely tell him, with the circumstances of such facts full in his view, that the only question is, whether they be themselves credible; and that, if this be allowed the *divine attestation* to the authority of *such a teacher* follows, by a connection which can never be broken, and which probably few men living will have an inveteracy of prejudice sufficient to gainsay.

The *historical books* of the *New Testament* do also admirably illustrate that argument in favour of *christianity*, which is drawn from *the accomplishment of prophecies*; and this, in a variety of respects. Many very important passages of

of this kind are *expressly quoted*; not merely by way of *allusion*, but by a *literal* and *exact application* of them, according to their genuine sense, and agreeably to the connection in which they stand. The application of some others, in themselves more dubious, will upon strict examination appear just, and may prove a key to the sense of many more, on the truest principles of *analogy*; as many writers have shewn, and perhaps no one, since Eusebius wrote his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, more judiciously than Mr. Jeffery in his controversy with Mr. Collins. Nay, the *texts* quoted by way of *allusion* and *accommodation*, of which there are such numerous instances, have consequently tended to the establishment of the *argument from prophecies*, however under injudicious management they may seem to have perplexed it; as they have had their share in recommending the *Jewish scriptures* to the perusal of *christians*, and so in guarding them more surely against any *possibility of corruption*, if the Jews themselves could have been wicked enought to attempt it.

But, besides these various views in which the *citations* may be considered under this head, I must farther observe, that when not this or that *particular passage* of the *evangelical history* alone, but the *whole series* of it comes to be compared with correspondent representations in the *Old Testament*, it fixes upon the mind the strongest impression that can well be imagined, of the reference of the *prophets* to *Jesus* as the *Messiah*. The ingenious Earl of Rochester, whose story is so celebrated, was deeply sensible of this with regard to the liii. of Isaiah, as illustrated by all the story of *our Lord's passion*; and there are many other sections of that *prophet*, and of several others, to which the remark may be applied; which indeed extends to all the general representations of the Messiah's character, conduct, and circumstances.

The account which the *New Testament* gives us of the *temper and character of our divine Redeemer*, is a topic of argument on this head by no means to be forgotten. We do not indeed there meet with any *studied encomiums* upon the subject. The authors deal not in such sort of productions; but, which is a thousand times better, they shew us *the character itself*. The sight of what is great and beautiful has another kind of effect, than the most eloquent description of it. And *here* we behold the *actions* of *Christ*; we attend his *discourses*, and have a plain and open view of his *behaviour*. In consequence of this, we see in him every thing *venerable*, every thing *amiable*. We see *a perfection of goodness* no where else in the world to be seen or to be heard: and numberless arguments plead at once, to persuade the heart, that it is absolutely impossible *such a person* should be engaged in a design founded in known falsehood, and tending only to mislead and ruin his followers.

And though, it is true, the *character of his apostles* does not fully come up to the standard of their master, nor is entirely free from some small blemishes; yet we see so little of that kind in them, and on the contrary *such an assemblage* of the human, divine, and social *virtues*, that we cannot, if we thoroughly know them, if we form an intimate acquaintance with them, entertain with patience the least suspicion that they were capable of a *part so detestable* as theirs must have been, if they knew Jesus to have been an *impostor*, and *the gospel a fable*; with which they must be chargeable, if *Christianity* were not indeed *authentic* and *divine*.

The series of *sufferings* which they endured, the gentle, humble patience with which they bore them, the steady perseverance and invincible fortitude with which they pursued their scheme, in the midst of them all, and with no earthly prospect but that of a continued hardship and persecution, till it should end in death, furnish out an important branch of this argument, which the book of *Acts*, especially taken in connection with the *Epistles*, does almost continually illustrate, in the most artless, and therefore the most forcible manner.

To conclude this head, the *history* before us represents, in the most clear and

convincing light, *the genius of that doctrine* which *Christ* taught, and of *the religion* which he came to settle in the world. When we view it as exhibited in *human writings*, we may mistake; for it is too often tinctured with the channel through which it has passed. Men of bad dispositions have warped it, to make it comply with the corruption of their own hearts, and to subserve, in many instances, the schemes of their ambitious and worldly interests. Good men, insensibly influenced by a variety of prejudices, which under fair and plausible forms have insinuated themselves into their breasts, have frequently mistaken, not the *essentials of Christianity*, (for no good man can mistake them,) but the *circumstantials* of it; and have propagated their various, and frequently contradictory mistakes, with a zeal which nothing but an apprehension that they were *its fundamentals* could have inspired: and thus its original purity and beauty have been debased and obscured: But *here* we drink *this water of life* at its fountain-head, untainted and unmixed, and with that peculiar spirit which at a distance from it is so apt to evaporate. *Here* we plainly perceive there is nothing in the scheme but what is most worthy of God to reveal, and of his Son to publish to the world: *Here* we see not as in the *heathen writers*, some detached sentiment, finely heightened with the beauty of expression and pomp of words, like a scattered fragment, with the partial traces of impaired elegance and magnificence; but the elevation of a complete temple, worthy of the Deity to whom it is consecrated: so harmonious a system of *unmingled truth*, so complete a plan of *universal duty*, so amiable a representation of *true morality* in all its parts, without redundancy, and without defect, that the more capable we are of judging of *real excellence*, the more we shall be prepossessed in its favour: And if we have a capacity and opportunity of examining together with it, *the books* which the followers of *other religions* have esteemed sacred, and *the systems of doctrines and manners* which their respective founders have published to the world, we shall find how much the *gospel* is credited by the comparison; we shall indeed find the difference much like that of a coarse picture of *sunshine*, from the original beams of that celestial luminary. This I have so deeply felt in mine own heart while reading *these books*, and especially while commenting upon them, that it has been matter of astonishment as well as of grief to me, that there should be any mind capable of resisting evidence so various, so powerful, and so sweet.

But this leads me to the other branch of the argument; in which I shall remind my reader,

Secondly, That *these books* are admirably adapted to make those *good impressions on the heart* which may prepare it for *eternal life*, through the name of the *Redeemer*, of whose divine mission they contain such incontestible proofs.

Now the most effectual demonstration of this would be, an attentive perusal of *these books*, not so much with a view to criticise upon them, as to give up the soul to their genuine influences, and to leave the heart to be (if I may so express myself) *carried away with the torrent* whither it will; and the impulse cannot fail of being in some happy direction, and, amidst all its varieties, will undoubtedly *bear us forward* towards that perfection of goodness and of happiness which is the great end of all our pursuits.

For surely the breast of every well-disposed reader, under the influences of that *blessed Spirit* which guided the *sacred penmen* in these lively and well-chosen narrations, must by every page of them be inflamed with some devout passion; and his progress must often be interrupted with tears of holy delight, or with warm and perhaps rapturous aspirations of soul. Surely *this adorable Saviour* cannot be heard, cannot be seen, without admiration and love. Surely the heart must often, as it were, *go out to meet him*, with its cheerful *hosannahs to him that cometh in the name of the Lord.* Often must it rise in affectionate praises

to

to *the God and Father of all*, who blessed this earth of ours with *such a visitant*, who enriched it with *such an unspeakable*, such an inestimable *gift*. A thousand times must it congratulate, and almost envy, *the happy lot of* those, who dwelling on earth, though in the meanest cottages, when it was *blessed with the presence* of such a teacher, of such a friend, had daily opportunities of conversing with him; and as often may it exult to think, that he is *still near by his spiritual presence*, carrying on the kind purposes of his appearance in mortal flesh, and waiting, by the dictates of his divine philosophy, to train up the immortal spirits of men for their proper and complete happiness. Under the impression of that thought, how strongly must the soul be disposed to *inquire after Christ*, to form an acquaintance with him, to commit itself to his discipline and guardianship, to trace his steps and as far as possible to *imbibe his Spirit*. What will appear so desirable, as to secure his friendship, to be honoured with his high approbation, and enriched with the blessings of his patronage and care? Receiving the *divine oracles* from his lips, what incomparable advantages have we for learning every thing truly great and lovely? What powerful inducements diligently to labour, ardently to pray, liberally to dispense good, calmly to endure injuries, patiently to support the heaviest afflictions, and resolutely to meet the most dreadful death, if called out to encounter it in the way of our duty?

Among many other *good affections* which the perusal of *this history* may naturally inspire, and which I have endeavoured often to suggest in the *improvements* which conclude each *section*, I cannot forbear mentioning one more; I mean, *a generous and cordial love to our fellow Christians of every rank and denomination*. I never reflect upon the *New Testament* in this view, but I find it difficult to conceive, how so much of *a contrary temper* should ever have prevailed among such multitudes, who have professed religiously to receive it, yea, whose office hath been to interpret and inforce it. To have listed under the banner of *Jesus*, to have felt his love, to have espoused his interest, to labour to serve him, to aspire after the enjoyment of him, should methinks appear to every one; even on the slightest reflection, *a bond of union* too strong to be broken by the different apprehensions that one or another of us may entertain, (perhaps too after diligent inquiry,) concerning the exact sense of some of the doctrines he taught, or the circumstantial forms of some of his institutions. An humble sense of our own weakness, and of the many imperfections of our character, which will never be more deeply felt than when we consider ourselves as standing before *our divine Master*, will dispose us to *mutual candour*, will guard us against the *indecency* of *contending in his presence*, and will, as St. Paul with admirable spirit expresses it, dispose us *to receive one another as Christ hath received us*. Yea our hearts will be so eagerly desirous of employing our life in serving him to the best purpose we can, that we shall dread the thought of mis-spending, in our mutual animosities, accusations, and complaints, the time that was given us for ends so much nobler, and which is capable of being employed to the honour of *our common Lord*, and for the benefit of the church and the world.

I hope, I have not forgot, in the ensuing work, *this lesson* which I have on every occasion been so solicitous to inculcate on others. It would have been almost impossible, on *some texts* which have fallen before me, especially in this *third volume*, not to have shewn my sentiments on *some points of discipline*, in which, if they were not different from those which generally prevail, my known conduct in continuing among the *Protestant Dissenters* would be equally foolish and wicked. Yet, in handling *these texts*, I have not only conscientiously abstained from all *reproaches*, to which indeed I am on no occasion inclined, and which I should esteem peculiarly *indecent* where the *religious establishment* of my country is in question, and above all where a body of men would be affected,

ed, many of whom have been, and are, among the ablest advocates and brightest ornaments of *our common Christianity:* but I have also been careful to adjust my expressions with as *much tenderness* and *respect,* as integrity and that reverence which an honest man would owe to the judgment of his own conscience, were it much more singular than mine, would admit. On these principles I have chosen to content myself, with giving what I take to be the true and genuine sense of the scripture in question, rather than to point out any society or body of men that seem to have mistaken it.

I have also been obliged, in many of my interpretations, to *differ from writers* of various countries, and of various denominations in our own, whom I greatly esteem, and from whom on other passages I have received much light; but I have in such cases been careful *not to drop any severe word:* as indeed I think, where we have reason to believe that *a writer* sincerely intends to illustrate Scripture, and to inform the world, he has so far at least *a title to our candour and respect;* though we may imagine him to be *much mistaken* in his judgment, and may think it our duty to endeavour to point out his mistake, and to guard others against it. I hope, such a conduct will need no apology to the *living writers* with whom I have taken such a liberty; nor shall I take it amiss to be *animadverted upon* by any of them, with the same spirit: and, if I may by this means be led to rectify *any mistakes* into which I may have unwarily fallen, I hope I shall be duely sensible of the obligation: For I esteem an endeavour to *set a man right in religious opinions,* which we ourselves apprehend to be important, the second office of *Christian friendship,* as that of attempting to *reform his morals* is undoubtedly the first.

No offence will, I hope, be taken at the method I have thought myself obliged in honour and conscience to have recourse to, for solving some of the difficulties which have occurred, and which I knew not how to account for candidly any other way, than by supposing, that here and there *our received reading* hath *varied from the original.* I believe, it will be allowed by every competent judge, that there is *no one manuscript* now in the world *unexceptionably exact.* And it is some satisfaction to me to reflect, that *critics* of the first character for modesty, piety, and orthodoxy, have not only made use of this expedient, but have abundantly justified it in their writings: among whom I cannot forbear mentioning those two justly celebrated critics, as well as accurate divines, Calvin and Beza; the latter of which has expressed his sentiments on this head in so judicious, correct, and elegant a manner, that I cannot forbear inserting his own words at the bottom of the page, though I have had obvious reasons in this work for taking care not to load the margin with quotations from the learned languages *.

I am

* Beza *in his note on* Acts vii. 14, *when he proposes the conjectural emendation of* πανσὶ *instead of* πᾶσι, *adds,* " Neque verò hujus erroris observatio quenquam debet offendere, vel in dubium revocare verbi divini auctoritatem; quum et ex *Hebræâ veritate,* ut diximus, emendetur, & salva nihilominus, tum doctrinæ, tum etiam historiæ ipsius, fides permaneat: & res ipsa clamat, non uno loco, temporis injuria, persecutionum acerbitate, adversariorum veritatis fraude, hæreticorum audacia, pastorum denique inscitiâ & oscitantiâ, *numerorum notus* labefactari, & alia periculosiora in sacros libros invehi potuisse: Quæ tamen eruditi & sancti homines, tum ex aliorum locorum collatione, tum ex fidei analogiâ, partim animadverterunt, & emendarunt; partim etiam posteris observanda, & corrigenda reliquerunt: Sic prospicicnte suæ ecclesiæ *Domino,* ut quamvis integri non pauci libri interciderint, & *errata* de quibus dixi irrepserint, tamen salutis doctrinam totam his ipsis libris certissime & verissime comprehensam habeat ecclesia, et ad finem usque sæculorum sit habitura."

Calvin *on* Matt. xxvii. 9. Harm. Evang. p. 354, *speaking of the insertion of* Jeremiah's *name*

I am sensible, how much I am indebted to the public for the *kind reception* it was pleased to give to the *two former volumes*. I hope they who favoured them with their patronage and encouragement, and have an opportunity of perusing this, will find by what I now offer them, that the indulgence shewn me, far from making me indolent, hath rather quickened my diligence. If God grant me life and health, I purpose concluding the whole in *three volumes more*; in which I shall still endeavour, by the divine assistance, uprightly to illustrate what I in my conscience believe to be *the true sense* of the *sacred writers*; and shall at the same time labour, to the utmost of that ability which God may give me, to elevate, to animate, and to unite the hearts of *my fellow Christians*, that I may subserve the grand plan of the gospel, and give the most substantial proof, that I have not studied its doctrines in vain. May I ever reap the first fruits of the attempt in my own soul! And if the slender and precarious thread of my life be cut short, before, in the midst of so many other necessary employments, such a work can be completed, may God graciously accept a *purpose* with which I trust he has inspired a breast unfeignedly devoted to his service! And may he in that case raise *a much abler hand* to execute a task, at the prospect of which, though after the preparation of more than twenty years, I feel a secret kind of terror, mingling itself with all the delight with which I am springing forward to undertake it!

Northampton, Dec. 11, 1746.

name (as he thinks) for Zechariah's, *says roundly,* "Quomodo *Hieremiæ nomen* obrepserit, me nescire fateor, nec anxiè laboro. Certe *Hieremiæ nomen* errore positum esse pro *Zechariâ*, res ipsa ostendit, quia nihil tale apud *Hieremiam* legitur, vel etiam quod accedat." *And on* Acts vii. 16, *where the name of* Abraham *seems to be put for that of* Jacob, *he says,* "In nomine *Abrahæ* erratum esse palam est:—Quare hic locus corrigendus est."

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE I first published the two former volumes of the *Family Expositor*, I have taken the *Harmony* under an attentive review; but though the publication of this volume, which has long since gone through the press to the end of the Chronological Table, has been delayed so many months beyond my expectation, yet during all this time I have not met with any convincing reasons for transposing one section of it. A variety of necessary engagements have prevented my taking the new and elaborate work of the Reverend Mr. Pilkington on this subject under that accurate examination which the learning, ingenuity, and candour apparent in it on the slightest review may well demand. I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of doing it, and shall receive much light and benefit from it. In the mean time, as a specimen of the readiness with which I shall make my acknowledgments on any such occasion, for farther instruction on subjects on which I have publicly delivered my own thoughts, I cannot but mention the great pleasure with which I have traced the illustration which the account of *our Lord's resurrection* has received, from those very weighty and accurate *observations* which have been made upon it, with so much sagacity, delicacy, and candour, by Gilbert West, Esq.

It is a great satisfaction to me, to find that we agree in several very important circumstances of the story, in which some late very ingenious writers on this subject have differed from us both; as it likewise is to see, that several of those versions and criticisms which I had proposed and pleaded for, have the sanction of Mr. West's concurrence in them. But as this gentleman has advanced several very material things relating to this very important part of the Harmony of the Evangelists, which were wholly unthought of by me or any other commentators that I have perused, and which also seem to carry along with them a very high degree of probability, in the happiest manner to agree with each other, and greatly to illustrate other scriptures, I shall here give my reader a brief view of Mr. West's scheme, referring to his invaluable work itself for a more particular account of it, as well as for a variety of most solid and important remarks, relating to the evidences of this great fact, and of the truth of Christianity in general, which is so inseparably connected with it.

The scheme proposed there, so far as I can recollect it from an attentive perusal, is this: That during the time of our blessed Redeemer's lying in the grave, several of the pious *women* who had attended him from Galilee, together with some of their female friends and acquaintance at Jerusalem, agreed to meet at his sepulchre early on the morning of the third day, to embalm the body. Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Salome, and Joanna, were principal persons in this appointment: The chief care of *preparing*, that is, pounding, mixing, and melting *the spices*, was left to Joanna and her company, who were to be there about sun-rising; whereas the two Maries and Salome (of

whom Matthew and Mark chiefly write) came thither πρωι before the appointed time *early in the morning*, or as the day dawned, in order θεωρησαι *to view the sepulchre*, that they might judge whether they and their companions could be able to *remove the stone* which closed it, or whether it would be necessary to call in other assistance, as they then knew nothing of the guard which was set upon it. While these three *women* last mentioned, were on their way, Jesus arose, when the angel had opened the sepulchre and struck the *guards* into amazement and consternation; the consequence of which was, that some of them went to the Jewish rulers, and joined in contriving and propagating the senseless falsehood of *the body being stolen*, and others went into other parts of the city, and told the matter as it really was. In the mean time the angel disappeared, and Mary Magdalene approaching the sepulchre, discerned from some distance that the very large *stone* that stopped it *was rolled away*, and concluding from thence that the body was removed, left the other Mary and Salome to wait for Joanna and her company, while she herself ran to Peter and John to acquaint them with what she had discovered. While she was gone, these two, (the other Mary and Salome) went toward the sepulchre, and entering into it, *saw*, to their great astonishment, *an angel*, who told them, that Jesus, whom he knew they sought, *was not there*, but was *risen* from the dead, and gave it them in charge to go and acquaint *his disciples* with it, and to let them know that he would give them a meeting in Galilee. The greatness of their consternation prevented them from saying any thing immediately to any one, even to some of their own company, who might pass and repass within their view at least, and so occasioned a delay which left room for some other circumstances. Just as they were on their return, Peter and John came, (perhaps passing by them at some distance,) and Mary Magdalene followed them. John at his first arrival only looked into the sepulchre; but when Peter came and entered it, John went in too, and from the circumstances in which he saw things, *believed* that Jesus was risen; though the *angel*, (who could appear or disappear at pleasure) did not render himself visible to either. They returned to the city, and Mary Magdalene, who was now alone, stooping down to look into the sepulchre, *saw two angels;* but (perhaps imagining they were young men, whom curiosity or accident might have brought thither) took little notice of them, and continued *weeping* in deep thought and distress, till Jesus appeared, and made himself known to her in those very remarkable words, John xx. 17. which Mr. West illustrates with some very peculiar observations *. Leaving her very suddenly, *our Lord* appeared to the other Mary and Salome, whom he permitted to embrace his feet, comforted them under their fear, and renewed the assurance the *angel* had given them, that he would meet *his disciples* in

* Our author observes, that this text, *I am not yet ascended*, &c. comprehends in a few words a variety of most important hints, which have not commonly been taken notice of in them; particularly that *our Lord* intended by them to recall to the minds of *his disciples* the discourse he had with them three nights before, in which he explained what he meant by *going to the Father;* (see John xvi. 28.) and by twice using the word *ascend*, designed to intimate, that he was to *go up to heaven*, not merely *in spirit*, as the pious dead do, but by a *coporeal motion* and translation, and that it would be *some time* before he took his final leave of earth by this intended *ascension:* All which weighty expressions and predictions concur with a thousand other circumstances to shew, how impossible it was that such an apprehended *appearance* should have been merely the result of a disordered imagination; a consideration, which Mr. West illustrates at large, as he also does the mistaken apprehension of the *disciples*, who, when some of their companions, whose veracity they could not suspect, testified they had *seen the Lord*, thought *his body* was *not risen*, but that it was only *his spirit* had appeared to them; which hint I mention as a key, by means of which many passages in the *Evangelists* are explained in this work.

in Galilee. While these things were passing at some distance, and the scene at the sepulchre was clear, Joanna and the women who brought the spices, (and of whom Luke only writes) came, and entering into the sepulchre, *at first saw no one* in it, till the *two angels*, who a few minutes before had appeared to Mary Magdalene, made themselves visible to Joanna and her attendants, and assuring them of the resurrection of Jesus, reminded them how it had been foretold by himself, with the previous circumstances of his sufferings, but gave them *no charge* concerning the information to be carried to the *apostles;* that having been committed to the others. Yet (as it was natural to suppose they would) some of this second company ran to the city, and, by whatever accident it happened, reached *the eleven*, and some other *disciples* who were with them, before the two Maries and Salome arrived, telling them, (which was all they could tell them) that they had *seen a vision of angels*, who asserted that Jesus was alive. Peter on this ran a second time to the sepulchre, (Luke xxiv. 12.) and not entering as before, but only stooping down and looking into it, he *saw no angels*, or any thing else but τα οθονια κειμενα μονα, *only the linen clothes lying there*, on which he returned; and just on his making that report, the *two disciples* who went that day to Emmaus, or some from whom they received their information, (Luke xxiv. 22—24.) left the place before the arrival of the two Maries and Salome; who, retarded, as was hinted above, by some unknown accident, (perhaps by guessing wrong as to the place where they might find the largest company together,) at last, however, reached them, and made abundant satisfaction for the little delay, (for all might perhaps have passed in an hour,) by assuring them, not only that *they* also had *seen an angel* who informed them of *their Lord's resurrection*, but that Jesus himself had appeared to them, and had even permitted himself to be touched by two of them.

This is Mr. West's *scheme* of this important story; and the reader will easily perceive, that it chiefly differs from mine in these two circumstances:—That it supposes the *women* to have made *two different visits* to the sepulchre, and in consequence of that, *two distinct reports;* whereas mine unites them, (though I do not suppose they all came together, but that they met there): And that it also makes Peter to have *run to it twice*, of which I now think there can be no reasonable doubt, though I before incorporated Luke's account with that of John, relating to his *running thither with* John on Mary Magdalene's first report.

On the whole, whatever embarrassments some may apprehend, I am fully convinced, that the *scheme* I have offered in my Harmony, will fully acquit the Evangelists from any charge of absurdity or contradiction; and I think it far preferable to any other method of adjusting them which I ever met with, before or since the publication, till this piece of Mr. West came into my hands: But his plan, though not altogether clear of some difficulties, (especially from the connection of the 1st and 10th *verses* of the xxivth of Luke with the intermediate,) yet seems on the whole to have so many advantages, that I am inclined to acquiesce in it. I doubt not but those of my readers, who have not read the ingenious piece from which *this extract* is taken, will be glad to find it here, and will take the first opportunity of perusing the book itself, in which they will find a variety of other excellent remarks. I cannot conclude without recommending it to the divine blessing, and declaring my joy, that so able and worthy a defender of Christianity is risen up, in a rank of life which leaves no room for insinuating any suspicion of those *secular views* to which some, who may perhaps judge of others by what they know of their own low principles of action, may be ready ungenerously, and in many instances ridiculously, to impute those efforts, which the *ministers of the gospel* are so frequently making for its vindication.

Since all the preceding part of this Postscript was written, the world has been blessed with another admirable production of this kind, from the pen of one the politest of writers and worthiest of men, who is lately become the public advocate of that religion, to which he hath much longer been a distinguished ornament. Many of my readers will undoubtedly know, that I refer to the *Observations on the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul*, by the honourable George Lyttleton, Esq. one of the Lords of the Treasury; a piece, if I may presume to give my opinion of it, as perfect in its kind as any our age has produced. I cannot but greatly regret, that I have not the opportunity of enriching my *notes* on the Acts with several of this gentleman's judicious and entertaining remarks, which I shall not fail to attempt, if a *second edition* should be required. In the mean time, I mention it here, that no one who has it in his power may lose the pleasure and benefit of perusing that masterly treatise; in which he will find a most compendious yet unanswerable *demonstration of Christianity*, proposed in so clear, elegant, and nervous a manner, with such intermingled traces of the author's excellent heart, that he must surely be among the most perfect, or the most unteachable of mankind, who is not greatly instructed and edified by it.

Oct. 28, 1747.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE ACTS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES, WRITTEN BY ST. LUKE.

SECT. XVI.

The Christian converts, being dispersed by persecution, go into other parts and preach the word. Philip the deacon goes to Samaria, where many embrace the gospel, as Simon the sorcerer also professes to do, and on that profession is baptized. Acts VIII. 1—13.

Acts VIII. 1.

AND at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts VIII. 1.

AND in that very *day* in which this inhuman murder was committed on Stephen, who led the van in the glorious army of martyrs, *there was a great persecution* excited *against the church of Jerusalem*, which continued to rage for some time; *and* such was the severity with which *they were* pursued by their malicious enemies, that *all* the principal members of the church were *dispersed through the regions of Judea and Samaria*[a], *except the apostles*, who with undaunted resolution were determined to continue at Jerusalem, how extreme soever their danger might prove, that they might there be ready to serve the interest of the church, as there should be occasion. SECT. XVI. Acts VIII. 1

2 And devout men carried

And Stephen was no sooner left for dead, but 2 certain *devout men*[b], had the courage to shew themselves

a *They were all dispersed*, &c.] Perhaps it was then, that Ananias went to Damascus, chap. ix. 10. while others, after they had preached the gospel in the neighbouring parts, travelled on to Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, chap. xi. 19.

b *Devout men.*] Dr. Benson thinks, (as Dr. Hammond *in loc.* and Mr. Baxter, Vol. IV. p. 864. did,) that these were *proselytes* as he also imagines Stephen to have been; but I can find no proof of either. Such a *token of respect* to one who had been publicly executed as *a blasphemer*, was an expression of *zeal* and *piety* which might justly entitle them to this honourable character. Thus Luke calls Joseph of Arimathea *a benevolent and upright man*, when he speaks of the generous and courageous regard he shewed to the body of Jesus; (Luke xxiii. 50.) It is possible, the manner in which these *devout men* celebrated the funeral of Stephen, might be urged by the enemies of *christianity*, as an excuse for farther severities.

c Like

SECT. xvi.

Acts VIII. 2.

themselves openly as the friends of that holy and excellent man, whose blood had been so unrighteously shed; and accordingly gathering round the corpse while it lay exposed to public infamy and abuse, they *carried Stephen forth* [*to his burial*] with solemn funeral procession, *and made great lamentation for him*, mourning that the church had lost so excellent an instrument of usefulness, though he himself was so much a gainer by it, as to be the object of congratulation rather than condolence.

carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

3 *But Saul*, whom we mentioned before, like some furious beast of prey, *made havock of the church* without mercy [c]; not only breaking in upon public assemblies, but *entering into houses and dragging* from them, without any respect either to age or sex, *men and women* [*whom*] *he committed to prison*, for no pretended crime but that of having embraced the gospel.

3 As for Saul, he made hovock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed *them* to prison.

4 *Nevertheless* God over-ruled all this cruelty and rage, to subserve his own wise and gracious purposes: for *they who were dispersed went about* into several parts, *preaching the word* [d] wherever they came; and in many places they were remarkably successful, to which the consideration of their being persecuted for conscience sake might in some measure help to contribute.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.

5 *And* we have particularly one instance of it in *Philip* the deacon [e]; who, after the death of his beloved brother and associate Stephen, *came to*

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria,

c Like some furious beast of prey, *made havock of the church.*] Wolfius observes, (*Cur. Philol. in loc.*) that this is the most proper signification of λυμαινεσθαι, which is often applied to the savages of the desert.

d *Preaching the word.*] There is no room to inquire, where these *poor refugees* had their orders. They were endowed with *miraculous gifts*; and if they had not been so, *the extraordinary call* they had *to spread the knowledge of Christ* wherever they came, among those who were ignorant of him, would abundantly *justify them* in what they did.

e *Philip* the deacon.] We are sure, it was not Philip *the apostle*, both as he *continued at* Jerusalem, and as *this* Philip had not the power of *communicating* the miraculous gift of *the Holy Spirit* by *laying on of hands.* (Compare ver. 14, 15, 17.) It must therefore be *the deacon*, no other of that name beside *the apostle* having been mentioned in this history. Some think that, for his fidelity and diligence in his inferior office, he was raised to the work of *an evangelist.* (Compare chap. xxi. 8. and 1 Tim. iii. 13.) But to infer from hence, that they, who are *ordained* to the office of *deacons*, have by virtue of that a right to *preach publicly*, is not only ungrounded, but seems contrary to the reason assigned by Peter for choosing *deacons*, chap. vi. 2—4. Besides, Apollos preached *before he was baptized*, therefore much less can we imagine, he was ordained. (See Acts xviii. 24, 25.) And Grotius justly observes, that in circumstances like these *any private person* might do it. (Compare chap. xi. 20. and see *Owen of Ordination*, p. 63.) As for Dr. Hammond's criticism on the words κηρυσσειν and ευαγγελιζεσθαι, as if the former signified *public preaching*, and the latter *teaching in a way of private converse*, it is sufficiently confuted by comparing verse 5 and 40. chap. xi. 20. xiii. 32. xiv. 15. and many other passages.

1 *Came*

Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

to the city of Samaria [f]; *and* knowing that all distinction between the people of that country and the Jews was now removed, freely *preached Christ unto them*, and proclaimed him as the promised Messiah.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

And the people who inhabited that city, notwithstanding their natural prejudices against the Jews, *unanimously attended to the things that were spoken by Philip; as they* not only *heard* the rational, convincing, and pathetic words which he spake, but were eye-witnesses of what he wrought in confirmation of his doctrine, *and saw the* astonishing *miracles which he performed.*

7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*, and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

For unclean spirits which had possessed many, crying with a loud voice, came out of them at Philip's command; *and many* others *who were paralytic and lame*, and laboured under the most obstinate disorders, *were* immediately *healed.*

8 And there was great joy in that city.

And there was great joy in that city, on account of those benevolent miracles which were performed by Philip in it, and of that excellent doctrine which he preached among them, containing such welcome tidings of pardon and eternal salvation.

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched

But at the time in which the gospel was thus brought by Philip to them, *a certain man, named Simon was before in that city*, who had made himself very remarkable by *using*, the unlawful arts of *magic* [g], by means of which he had performed

[f] *Came to the city of Samaria.*] For the origin of the Samaritans, and the differences between them and the Jews, see *note* g on John iv. 9. Vol. VI. p. 162. It is certain, they were *better prepared* to receive the gospel, than most of the Gentile *nations*, as they worshipped *the true GOD*, and acknowledged the authority of the *Pentateuch*; and as we do not find, that they had either such notions of the *Messiah's temporal reign* as the Jews, or had received the *Sadducean principles*, which were both *very strong prejudices* against the *christian* scheme. (See Dr. *Benson's History*, Vol. I. p. 153.) It is not improbable, that *the city* here spoken of was Sichem, where Christ himself had preached in the beginning of his ministry; (John iv. 5. 40. *&c. seq.*) which was for many years *the capital* of that country. See *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xi. cap. 8. § 6.

[g] *Using* the unlawful arts of *magic.*] Dr. Benson thinks μαγευων to be entirely of the *same signification* with Μαγος, and intended to tell us, that this Simon was one of the sect of the *Magi*, for whose principles and history see *Dr. Prideaux, Connect.* Vol. I. p. 174. *&c. seq.* It is indeed possible, he might profess himself of *that sect*; but I think the word μαγευων imports much more, and amounts to the same with one *who used inchantments*, pretending, in consequence of them, to exert some *supernatural powers*; whereas the word *Magus* (at least about Christ's time) seems to have signified much the same with our English word *Sage*, and to denote *a proficient in learning*, and especially in *astronomy*, and other branches of *natural philosophy*, to which the Persian *Magi* addicted to themselves, and so gave name to many who were far from holding the peculiarities of *that sect.* (Compare *note* a on Mat. ii. 1. Vol. VI p. 77. Yet, as many *natural philosophers* pretended also to be *magicians* in the common sense of the word among us, and might make their *natural knowledge* subservient to that pretence, when it was mere imposture, it is not improbable, that they generally called themselves *Magi*; and so the *verb* μαγευων might come to signify *the making use of unlawful arts.*

SECT. XVI.

formed such things as were exceeding marvellous *and astonishing* to *the* whole *nation of Samaria, pretending himself to be some extraordinary person* [h], possessed of supernatural pow-

Acts VIII. 9.

10 ers: *To whom they all paid* great *regard, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is* surely *the great power of God*, the long-expected Messiah, and (if we may so speak) Omnipotence itself incarnate, or he could never

11 do such wonderful things. *And they paid* this *regard to him*, not on seeing one or two extraordinary facts, but *because he had for a long time astonished them with* the lying wonders that he wrought by [*his*] *enchantments.*

12 *But when they gave credit to Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and* the important truths connected with *the name of Jesus Christ, they* embraced the gospel in great numbers, and *were baptized both men and women.*

13 *And Simon himself also believed* the truth of that doctrine which this divine messenger taught [i], though his heart was not savingly transformed by its power; *and being baptized* on a profession of that faith, *he* always *kept near to Philip, beholding with amazement the great and powerful miracles which were wrought* by him [k], with which he was himself as much transported as the Samaritans had formerly been at the sight of his magical performances.

witched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

IMPROVE-

arts, (as it plainly does here) while the *noun*, from whence it was derived, might still retain a more extensive and innocent signification.

h *Some extraordinary person.*] Irenæus tells us, (*lib.* i. *cap.* 20.) that Simon boasted, he had appeared to the Samaritans as the father, to the Jews as the Son, and to the Gentiles as the Holy Spirit; and Justin Martyr, that he asserted, *all the names of God* were to be ascribed to him, and that he was *God above all principality, power, and virtue.* (See *Just. Mart. Apol.* ii. p. 69. & *Dial.* p. 349.) But, if he ever made these pretences, it was probably after this time; for before it, he seems to have been entirely a stranger to the first elements of the *christian* doctrine, to which these blasphemies refer. The version of 1727 renders η δυναμις του Θεου η μεγαλη, *the plenipotentiary of God*; but that is far from expressing the emphasis of the phrase.

i *Simon himself also believed.*] Perhaps, as Mr. L'Enfant and Limborch conjecture, he might think Philip an *abler magician* than himself, and hope, by pretending to be his disciple, he might have an opportunity of learning his superior arts.

k *Beholding with amazement*, &c.] It seems with particular elegance and propriety, that *the same word*, which had been used to express the manner in which the Samaritans were affected with Simon's *enchantments*, ver. 9, 11.) is here used to describe the impression which Philip's *miracles* made on him, it being there expressed by εξιστων and εξεστακεναι, and here by εξισασθαι. It seems therefore quite wrong to translate the former *infatuated*, and the latter *transported*, as the author of the abovementioned *version* has done.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XVI.

Acts VIII. 2.

It was honourably and well done of these *devout men*, to pay this last token of respect to the remains of this *first martyr* in the Christian cause, by *carrying him to his funeral* with solemn pomp and public *lamentation*, though he died like an infamous criminal. Our ever-living and victorious *Lord*, no doubt, took it well at their hands, and they will be *recompensed at the resurrection of the just*, when that mangled *body* which they deposited in the grave shall be *transformed into the glorious image* of him for whom he gave it up to destruction, and to whose immediate and faithful care *he committed* the far nobler and more important part.

The wrath of man, O Lord, *shall praise thee*, (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) It was particularly made to *praise thee* in this instance, by sending out the *gospel-missionaries*, who, during the short repose of the 1 church, had been qualifying for their work, and *dispersing them* through all the neighbouring countries: Had *the calm* continued longer, while they were so happy in the *love* and *fellowship of each other*, they might have been too much inclinable to *build their tabernacles at Jerusalem*, and *to say*, *It is good for us to be here* (Mat. xvii. 4.); such delightful *mutual converse* might have engaged them to prolong *their abode there* to future *months*, and 4 perhaps *years*: In mercy to the *churches* therefore, and even to *themselves*, whose truest happiness was connected with their usefulness, were they, like so many *clouds big with the rain of heaven*, driven different ways by the wind of *persecution*, that so they might empty themselves in *fruitful showers* on the several tracts of land through which they went *preaching the gospel*.

But *the remainder of* the *wrath* of this cruel Saul, and the rest 1 of the *persecutors*, was so *restrained* in the midst of its career, that *the apostles*, who of all others seemed the most obnoxious persons, were for the present *secure in Jerusalem*; the *power of Christ* wrought secretly for their defence, and, by some unknown operation, either *softened* or *awed* the minds of those who (humanly speaking) had it in their power to *add their blood* to that of Stephen. Thus was *our Lord's prediction* fulfilled with regard to them, in some of the most pressing dangers that could be imagined, that *not a hair of their head should perish*, (Luke xxi. 18.); and thus was *their fidelity* and *courage* approved, by their *continued residence* even in this hazardous situation, till Providence gave a farther signal for *their removal*: In this, and in that, they were no doubt *directed by supernatural influence*, and we may admire their dutiful obedience to *those commands*, the particular reasons of which we cannot now fully trace.

SECT. XVI.

The continued outrages and cruelties of Saul serve more and more to illustrate the sovereignty and freedom of divine grace, in that *conversion* which we are hereafter to survey; and give us a view of a very delightful *contrast* between the warmth of those efforts which he made first *to destroy*, and then with proportionable zeal *to save*.

Ver. 3

5, & seq. It is also pleasant to observe, how *the gospel* mutually *conquered the prejudices* between the Jews and the Samaritans, teaching the Jews to communicate, and the Samaritans to receive it with pleasure. It was a wonderful providence which had permitted

9 *the inchantments of Simon* to be so successful before; but at length

11 *Simon also believed and was baptized:* We see in this, as in a thou-

13 sand nearer instances, that there may be *speculative faith in the gospel*, where there is *no true piety;* and if *such persons* on the profession of that faith, where nothing appears contrary to it, be *admitted to those ordinances* by which *Christians* are distinguished from the rest of mankind, it is *an evil* in the present state of things *unavoidable;* and the conduct of *Christian ministers* and *societies* in *admitting such*, will be *less displeasing* to God than a rigorous severity. May God give us *wisdom* to guide our way, that we may obtain *the happy medium* between *prostituting divine ordinances* by a foolish credulity, and *defrauding the children of the household of their bread*, because they have not reached *such a stature*, or do not seek it *in those forms* or *gestures* which our mistaken caution may sometimes be ready to demand.

SECT. XVII.

Peter going down to Samaria, to impart spiritual gifts to the converts there, discovers and censures the hypocrisy of Simon. Acts VIII. 14—25.

Acts VIII. 14.

SECT. XVII.

Acts VIII. 14.

NOW *when the apostles, who,* as we observed before, *were* still *at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God,* by the preaching of Philip the Evangelist, as was related above, *they* were desirous that these new converts might be farther settled in their Christian profession, by those spiritual gifts which no inferior teacher or officer in the church could bestow; and accordingly *sent to them* two of the most considerable of their own number, namely, *Peter and John*, who had been so remarkable for the miracle they had performed, and the courageous manner in which they had borne

Acts VIII. 14.

NOW when the apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.

Acts VIII. 15

15 Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

borne their testimony to the gospel: *Who,* though once strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans[a], now cheerfully undertook the province; and *going down* thither *prayed for them that they might receive* the extraordinary gifts of *the Holy Spirit*[b], and so be openly put on a level with the believing Jews, and be shewn to be equally owned by God as his people. *For* though the supernatural influences of the Spirit were displayed among them in the surprising miracles which Philip had performed, these extraordinary powers were not communicated to them, and *he was not yet fallen on any of them, only they were baptized,* as was said before, *in the name of the Lord Jesus.* But after the apostles had been praying for them, God was *then* pleased, in a visible and extraordinary manner, to answer their request; for *they* had no sooner *laid* [*their*] *hands on* these Samaritan converts, and recommended *them* to the divine favour, but it was followed with a wonderful effect, *and they* immediately *received the Holy Spirit,* and spake with tongues, and performed other extraordinary works.

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

16

17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

17

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

Now when Simon the magician, of whom we spake before, *saw* with astonishment *that the Holy Spirit* in his extraordinary operations *was* thus apparently *given by the imposition of the apostles hands,* as he imagined with himself, that if he could perform the like, it might turn considerably to his own honour and advantage, especially if by this means he could form persons to the knowledge of languages which they had never been at the trouble of learning in a natural way, *he* went to the apostles, and *offered them* a considerable sum of *money: Saying,* Let me prevail with you by this reward to *give me also this power,* which I have seen you exercise

18

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands

19

[a] Though once strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans.] John was one of those who, provoked at their inhospitable treatment of Christ, (perhaps in proportion to the degree in which he honoured and loved his divine Master,) had asked a permission to *bring down fire from heaven to consume them:* (Luke ix 54;) But he now understood the genius *of the gospel* much better.——It is observed by Dr. Whitby and others, that, as Peter was *sent with* John on this errand by the *other apostles* they had no notion of his being *their head* or superior.

[b] *That they might receive the Holy Spirit.*] We shall not enter into any controversy, as to the foundation this has been supposed to lay for the rite of *confirmation,* as now practised in some *Christian* and *Protestant churches.* It may be sufficient to observe, that here were *extraordinary gifts* evidently conferred by *extraordinary officers;* and how suitably this was done in the present case is hinted in the *paraphrase,* and more largely shewn by Dr. Benson; (*Hist.* Vol. I. p. 157, 158.)

[c] *Let*

SECT. XVII.] Acts VIII. 20.

cise with so much ease, *that on whomsoever I* shall *lay* my *hands, he may receive* this extraordinary communication of *the Holy Spirit.*

But when *Peter* heard so infamous an offer, he was not able to conceal his indignation, and therefore *said to him*, in his own name and that of John, *Let thy money go with thee to* the *destruction*[c] to which thou art thyself hastening, *since thou hast thought* so vilely of *the* free and invaluable *gift of* the blessed *God*, as to imagine it *might be purchased with money.* It is very evident, from such a detestable proposal, that notwithstanding the profession thou hast made, *thou* art indeed an utter stranger to the efficacy of the gospel, and *hast no part nor lot in this matter*, nor any interest in the important spiritual blessings to which all these extraordinary gifts are subservient; *for thine heart is not upright in the sight of God*[d], otherwise thou wouldst think far more honourably of this Spirit of his, than to form a mercenary scheme to traffick in it in this scandalous manner. *Repent therefore* immediately *of this thy* enormous *wickedness*[e], *and beg of God* with the deepest humiliation and the most fervent prayer, *if perhaps* his infinite mercy may yet be extended to such a wretch, and *the* blasphemous *thought of thy* corrupt *heart may be forgiven thee: For* though thou wast so lately washed with the water of baptism

hands he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall

c *Let thy money go with thee to destruction.*] This is not *an imprecation*, but a strong way of admonishing Simon of his danger, and of expressing how much rather *the apostle* would see the greatest *sum of money* lost and cast away, than receive any part of it on such shameful terms.

d *Thine heart is not upright in the sight of God.*] This is no instance of Peter's miraculously *discerning spirits*, for every *common minister* or *Christian* might have made the inference in such circumstances. But on the other side, this story will by no means prove Peter to have been *destitute of this gift*. He might (like Christ in the case of Judas,) have discerned Simon's *hypocrisy* long before he thought fit to discover it openly, or he might have *the gift* really *in some instances*, though *not in this*; for there is no more reason to suppose, that Christ ever gave any of his servants *an universal power* of *discerning the hearts and characters* of all they conversed with, than there is to believe, he gave any of them a power of *healing all the sick* they came near which we are sure that Paul (though he was *not inferior to the chief of the apostles*, 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11;) had not; otherwise he would not have suffered *the illness of Epaphroditus* to have brought him *so near to death*, (Phil. ii. 25—27,) nor have *left* so useful a fellow-labourer as *Trophimus sick at Miletum*; (2 Tim. iv. 20.)

e *Repent therefore*, &c.] Here is so incontestable an evidence of *an unconverted sinner* being *exhorted to repentance* and *prayer*, while he was known to be in that state, that it is astonishing it should ever have been disputed; and one would think, none could be so wild as to imagine, *faith in Christ* was *not included in that repentance* and *prayer*, which an *apostle* preaches to a baptized person *as the way of obtaining forgiveness*. The *dubious manner* in which he speaks of *his being forgiven*, intimates, not that *his sincere repentance* might possibly *fail of acceptance*, for that is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel, but that after the commission of *a sin*, so nearly approaching *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, there was *little reason to hope* he would ever be brought *truly to repent.*

SECT. XVII.

Acts VIII. 23.

gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

baptism, *I* plainly *perceive that thou art* still *in the* very *gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity*[f], plunged in that hateful pollution which must be bitterness and poison in the latter end, and held in the chains of thine own covetousness and carnality, and consequently in a servitude utterly inconsistent with that state of glorious liberty into which the children of God are brought; so that thou art on the borders of dreadful and aggravated destruction, if immediate repentance does not prevent.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

24 *And Simon*, as he could not but be very much alarmed by such a solemn admonition, *answered and said* to the apostles, If you indeed conceive my case to be so bad, at least extend your charity so far, as to *make your supplications to the Lord on my account*[g], *that none of these* terrible *things, which ye have* often *spoken* of[h] as the fatal consequence of sin, *may come upon me:* For I am far from disbelieving the truth of the gospel, how improper soever my proposal might be, or however derogatory from the honour of it.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

25 Thus did the two apostles, Peter and John, perform the errand they were sent upon, and executed their commission; *when therefore they had borne their testimony* to the truth of the gospel[i], *and had spoken the word of the Lord* Jesus Christ to many, who had not received it from the mouth of Philip, *they returned to* the other ten at *Jerusalem; and* as they went along they *preached the gospel in many* other towns and *villages of the Samaritans*, which lay in their way.

IMPROVE-

f *In the gall of bitterness*, &c.] The gall of bitterness is *the bitterest gall*; and the whole sentence expresses, in Peter's strong manner of speaking, *how odious* and *wretched* a creature Simon now appeared to him. How much *more odious* in the eyes of an holy God must *such a sinner* be! (Compare Deut. xxix. 18; xxxii. 32; and Isa. lviii 6.) Albertus (*Observ.* p. 256,) and De Dieu, would render it, "I see thee as the very gall of bitterness, and a bundle of iniquity." (Compare Mat. xix. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 18; Heb. viii. 10; in which places the former thinks it is used *in the same sense* as here.) See Beza's beautiful illustration of this text.

g *Make your supplications to the Lord on my account.*] It is much to be feared, this pretence of *conviction* and *humiliation* was only to prevent Peter and John from *disgracing him* among the body of Christians: for it is reasonable to suppose, this conversation passed *in private* between them; and perhaps Simon might have *some hope*, that, if *the secret were kept*, he might reduce the people when Peter was gone, to their former subjection to him, notwithstanding their *conversion to Christianity*.

h *These things which ye have spoken.*] As the *plural number* is here used, (if it be not, as I think it sometimes is, put for the *dual*,) since one cannot imagine, as I hinted above, that the proposal was *publicly* made, it seems most natural to refer this to *the awful things* he had heard in the course of Christian *preaching*, concerning the terrible effects of the divine displeasure against *impenitent sinners* in the future.

i *Born their testimony.*] See *note* g on Luke xxiv. 48, Vol. vii. p. 483, § 202.

k *Histories*

SECT. XVII.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 14-17 LET us observe *this peculiar honour* by which *the apostles* were distinguished, that *the holy Spirit was given by the imposition of their hands.* Thus did Christ bear his testimony to them, as the authorized *teachers of his church*; and it evidently appears, that we may with great safety and pleasure submit ourselves to their instruction; for these *extraordinary gifts* were intended in some measure *for our benefit*; that by an entire resignation to *their authority*, thus attested, we might be made *partakers of those graces*, in comparison of which *the tongues of men and of angels* would be but *as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.* (1 Cor. xiii. 1.)

18, 19 Who can read without *horror* the infamous proposal which Simon made, when he thought of *purchasing the gift of God with money?* With somewhat of the *same horror* must we look on all those by whom *sacred things* are either *bought* or *sold*; it is an 20 infamous traffick, about which *an upright man* cannot deliberate a moment, but will *reject it at once* with an honest scorn and indignation, like that of Peter in the present instance. God grant that none of the *ordinances of Christ* may ever be *prostituted* to secular ends, which seems a crime almost equally enormous! In vain it is for men to *profess themselves Christians*, in vain to *submit* like Simon to *baptism*, or like him to *adhere constantly* to the mi- 21 nisters of the gospel, *if their heart be not right with God*; an hypocritical conduct like this will proclaim it aloud, *that they are in the* 23 *gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.* Wash us, O God, from this odious and polluting *gall*, which naturally overspreads us; and loosen these *bonds of sin* with which Satan may sometimes *bind those* who have *a name* and *a place in thy church*, and in which he conveys them to final and everlasting *destruction.*

22 Yet let us not *utterly despair* even of the *worst of men*, but direct them to that great *universal remedy*, a deep and serious *repentance of their sins*, and an earnest *address to God* by prayer; to him who can wash us from *crimson stains*, and break in pieces *fetters of* 24 *iron.* It is some *token for good*, when sinners seem to *fall under reproof*, and *desire the prayers* of those who are more upright than themselves: But if men are animated in such requests and submissions, by no more noble and generous a principle than *a fear of destruction from God*, there is great reason to *suspect the sincerity* of that *repentance* which they profess, and to apprehend that, *like* Simon, they will *unsay all their confession*, and perhaps *like him* (if we may credit the most authentic uninspired *histories of the church*

church[k]) become *open enemies* to that *gospel* which they pretended for a while to believe and reverence. SECT. XVII.

SECT. XVIII.

Philip, by divine direction, instructs an Ethiopian Eunuch in the faith of Christ; and, having baptized him, goes and preaches the gospel in the neighbouring coasts of the Mediterranean sea. Acts VIII. 26, *to the end.*

Acts VIII. 26.

AND the angel of the Lord, spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Acts VIII. 26.

WHEN these important affairs at Samaria were dispatched, *and* the church there was in so flourishing and happy a state, *an angel of the Lord spake to Philip* the evangelist[a], who had been so successful in his labours amongst them, *saying, Arise and go towards the south, by the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is* through the *desart* or wilderness of Judea[b]; for there in that retired solitude thou shalt meet with a person whom I will mark out to thee, with whom thou art to have a conversation of great moment. SECT. XVIII. Acts VIII. 26

27 And he arose, and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace Queen of the Ethiopians, who had the

And without presuming more particularly to inquire into the design of the errand on which he was sent, *he arose and took his journey* as the angel had directed him: *And behold, a certain Ethiopian eunuch*[c], *a grandee* in the court *of Candace* 27

[k] *Histories of the church.*] See *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 14; *Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. lib.* i. *cap.* 1; and compare *note* [h], § 16, p. 18.

[a] *An angel of the Lord spake to Philip.*] It gives us a very high idea of the *gospel*, to see the *ministers of it* receiving such immediate direction from *celestial spirits* in the particular discharge of their office.

[b] *Which is desart.*] The construction of the Greek leaves it dubious, whether *this clause* refers to Gaza, or to *the way* that led to it. Dr. Benson, with Grotius, Drusius, and other considerable writers, concludes that Gaza, (a city of the Philistines often mentioned in the *Old Testament*, Judg. xvi. 1, 21. Zeph. ii. 4. Zech. ix. 5, after having been conquered by Pharaoh king of Egypt, (Jer. xlvii. 1,) was ruined by Alexander *the Great*, and afterwards rebuilt with great magnificence, (*Arrian. de Exped. Alex. lib.* iv. *cap.* 2; *Strab. Geograph. lib.* xvi. p. 522; *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xi. *cap.* 8, § 4, & *lib.* xiii. *cap.* 13, [al. 21,] § 3,) the *new city* was built at some distance from the *old*, which was left in ruins, and therefore called *Gaza the desart*. But, as this last fact is not sufficiently attested, I rather think, with Beza and Casaubon, that Philip is here directed to take *that road* to Gaza, which *lay through the wilderness*, which (though perhaps it might not be the shortest,) was chosen by the *eunuch* as *the more retired:* and I think the Greek *idiom* favours this interpretation, as it is not η, but αυτη εστιν ερημος.

[c] *A certain Ethiopian eunuch.*] It is certain that the Hebrew word סָרִיס, which answers to ευνουχος, an *eunuch*, is sometimes very properly rendered *an officer;* (See Gen. xxxvii. 36. xxxix. 1. 2 Kings viii. 6. 1 Chron. xxviii. 1.) And the learned Heinsius takes pains to establish an *etymology* of ευνουχος, which should make it an intimation of the *good disposition* of the person to whom it was given. But in what sense it is used here, is an inquiry of no manner of importance; and I think any curious discussion of such kind of questions would by no means suit a *Family Expositor*.—I only add with Beza, that it seems quite ridiculous to imagine, that αγνος was intended to

SECT. XVIII.

Candace the Queen of the Ethiopians[d], *who was* the person that presided *over all her treasure*, was travelling that way; *who*, as he was entirely proselyted to the Jewish religion, *had* lately *come to worship at Jerusalem* at one of the great feasts:

Acts VIII. 27.

the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship.

28 This man *was* then *returning* home; *and* his mind being deeply impressed with devout and religious sentiments, in consequence of those solemnities which had passed in that sacred place, as he pursued his journey, while he *sat in his chariot*, he was *reading the prophet Isaiah*[e]; that he might thus fill up that vacant space of time which his journey allowed him to some valuable purpose, and so might be better prepared to pass with safety through those busy scenes which would lie before him when he arrived at home.

28 Was returning and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.

29 *And the spirit*, by that secret suggestion, which inspired men could certainly distinguish as a divine revelation, *said to Philip*, *Approach, and join thyself to this chariot*, and enter into conversation with the person who sitteth in it, without fear of offending him, or exposing thyself to any inconvenience.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot.

30 *And Philip*, *running up* to the chariot, *heard him reading* the Scriptures; for he read aloud, that his own mind might be more deeply impressed with it, and that his servants who were near him might receive some benefit by it. And Philip, being well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, easily perceived that it was the book of *the prophet Isaiah* which was then before him, and that the passage would give him a very proper opportunity for entering into discourse with him concerning Christ, and delivering to him that evangelical message with which he was charged: He therefore took occasion to begin the conversation from this circumstance, *and said* to the eunuch, *Dost thou understand* the true

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou

to signify any thing more than τις; I have therefore rendered it accordingly.

d *A grandee* in the court *of Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians.*] It appears, that *Candace* was *a name* common to several of the *queens* who reigned in Meroe, a part of Ethiopia, to the south of Egypt: (Compare *Plin. Nat. Hist. lib.* vi. *cap.* 29; and *Alexand. Geniel. Dier. lib.* i. *cap.* 2.) So that it is very uncertain, whether *this princess* be the person mentioned by Dio Cassius and Strabo, as at war with the Romans in the time of Augustus.—I know not how far we are to regard the authority, on which De Dieu tells us that the name of *this eunuch* was *Judith*, and that of *the Queen*, by which she was distinguished from others, *Lacasa.*

e *Sat in his chariot reading*, &c.] Probably *this chariot* was something in the form of our *chaises with four wheels*; for though *the eunuch* did not guide it himself, there was room for another person to *come and sit with him*, (ver. 31.) the charioteer therefore seems to have sat on a seat by himself.

f *In*

thou what thou readest?

true sense of *those* sublime and important *things which thou art reading?* SECT. xviii.

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? and he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

And the eunuch was so far from being offended at the freedom he took, that *he* mildly and respectfully *said* in reply, *How can* it be that *I* should fully understand such obscure oracles as these, *unless some one*, who is better acquainted with the contents of them, *should guide me*, and throw that light upon them which I, who am so much a stranger to the Jewish affairs, must necessarily want? *And* concluding from the question he put, besides what he might conjecture from his habit, that he was better acquainted with these things than himself, *he requested Philip that he would come up and sit with him* in the chariot, where there was room conveniently to receive him, that so he might be farther informed in matters of so great importance. Acts VIII. 31

32 The place of the Scripture which he read, was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so he opened not his mouth:

Now the period or passage *of scripture which he was reading* at that time, *was this*; (Isa. liii. 7, 8.) "*He was brought to the slaughter as a sheep, and as a lamb before its shearer* [*is*] *dumb, so he opened not his mouth: In his* deep *humiliation his judgment was taken away*[f]; *and who shall declare* or describe *his generation*[g]? *for* 32

[f] *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.*] The present reading of the Hebrew *clause*, answering to this, is much more agreeable to *our translation* of Isa. liii. 8.) *He was taken from prison and from judgment.* But the *seventy interpreters*, whose *version* is here literally transcribed in the Greek and exactly rendered in *our translation*, instead of וממשפט לקח appear to have read משפט לקח מצער, which seems either to have been *the true reading*, or in sense equivalent to it: for I cannot think, as Beza and many other commentators do, that it refers to *Christ's being taken* by his resurrection *from his confinement* in the grave, *and from the judgment* or *sentence* which had been executed upon him; agreeable to which Mr. L'Enfant renders it, *His condemnation was taken away by his* very abasement; that is, his stooping to death gave occasion to this triumph; a sense, neither natural in itself, nor favoured by the *connection* as it stands in Isaiah. It seems rather to mean, if the Greek *version* be here admitted, "Jesus appeared in so *humble a form*, that, though Pilate was convinced of his innocence he seemed *a person of so little importance*, that it would not be worth while to hazard any thing to preserve him." Le Clerc (in his *Supplement to Dr. Hammond*,) intimates this interpretation, with a small, and (so far as I can judge, unnecessary and unwarrantable *change* in the version, *In his humiliation he was judged, he was taken away.* But our *translation* is far *more literal* and to *take away a person's judgment* is a known *proverb* for oppressing him. See Job xxvii. 2.

[g] *Who shall declare* or describe *his generation?*] This is one of the many passages of the *Old Testament Prophecies*, in which it is not so difficult to find a sense fairly applicable to Christ, as to know *which to prefer* of several that are so. Many *ancient*, as well as *modern writers*, have referred it to the *mystery* of *his deity*, or of *his incarnation*; but Calvin and Beza say, this was owing to *their ignorance of the Hebrew*, the word דור not admitting such a sense; and it is certain, it very ill suits the *connection* with the following clause. Dr. Samuel Harris has a long discourse (which seems only a fine-spun cob-web,) to prove, that it refers to *his not having any witnesses* to appear for him, and give an account of his life and character, as he takes עצר in the former clause to signify *his having no advocate* to plead his cause. (See his *Second Discourse*, p. 65. *& seq.* and his *Essay*, p. 143—146.) Others, with Calvin

SECT. xviii.

Acts VIII. 33.

for innocent as he was, *his life is cut off from the earth.*" A passage expressly referring to the meekness with which the blessed Jesus should endure all his sufferings, while ungrateful sinners, in contempt of all laws both human and divine, persecuted him even to the death.

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 *And the eunuch answering to Philip, said, I beseech thee* to inform me, *of whom doth the prophet say this? of himself, or some other person?* Was Isaiah thus inhumanly put to death by the Jews? or did he foretell the sufferings of some future and greater person?

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 *Then Philip*, secretly adoring the divine Providence in giving him so fair an opportunity, *opened his mouth* [h] with an air of solemnity proportionable to the importance of what he had to say, *and beginning from this* very *scripture*, in which he was so plainly delineated, *preached to him* the glad tidings of that *Jesus* [i], of whom not Isaiah alone, but so many of the other prophets spoke: And after he had laid before him the predictions recorded in scripture concerning him, he bore witness to the glorious accomplishment of them, and gave him the history of those extraordinary facts which had lately happened in confirmation of that gospel he taught.

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus,

36 His noble hearer, in the mean time, listened attentively, and though he saw no miracle performed in evidence of the truth of Philip's doctrine, he found such a light breaking in upon

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came

vin and Beza, think it is as if the prophet had said, "Who can declare how long he shall live and reign, or *count the numerous offspring* that shall descend from him?" But not to say that *this idea* is much more clearly expressed by the prophet in verse 10. which on this interpretation is a *tautology*. I cannot find that דור and זרע are used as *synonymous terms*. The former of those words in the Hebrew signifies the same with *generation of men* in English, who are *contemporaries*, (Gen. vii. 1. Jud. ii. 10. Psal. xcv. 10. cix. 13.) and as γενεα *in the Septuagint* has most frequently *this sense*, so it evidently has in the writings of Luke. (See Luke xi. 30, 50. xvii. 25. Acts ii. 40. xiii. 36.) And therefore I suppose, with Dr. Hammond, the sense to be, "Who can *describe* the obstinate infidelity and barbarous injustice of *that generation of men*, among whom he appeared, and from whom he suffered such things?" But as it did not seem proper to determine this by rendering it, (as in the *version* in 1727.) *Who can describe the men of his time!* because *a translator of Scripture* should leave ambiguous expressions, as he finds them,) so I thought it would be best to insert *the paraphrase* on both these clauses *in the notes*, that I might leave room for *the eunuch's question* in the *next verse*, which otherwise must have been superseded.

[h] *Philip opened his mouth.*] See *note* c on Mat. v. 2. Vol. VI. p. 199.

[i] *Preached to him Jesus.*] Limborch very largely shews, in his *commentary* on this passage, how shamefully the Jews pervert the whole 53d of Isaiah, in expounding it of *the afflictions of Israel*; and I am surprized to find, that Dr. Hammond intimates, it might be accomplished in some one who lived quickly after Isaiah's time.—See all that Mr. Collins has urged on that head (*Literal Scheme*, chap. v. § 12. p. 208—220.) abundantly confuted by *Dr. Bullock, Vindic.* p. 147—156. Compare *Bishop Chandler of Christianity*, p. 174—178

k *I*

came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See *here* is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?

upon his mind from the view of the prophecies, and such an inward conviction wrought in his spirit by the divine influence, that he became a sincere convert to the gospel. *And* having for some time discoursed together of the person and the sufferings of Christ, and of the method of salvation by him, *as they went by the way, they came to* a *certain water*, there being in that place some pool or stream adjoining to the road; *and the eunuch*, having learnt what was the rite of initiation which the great prophet and sovereign of the church had appointed, was willing to embrace the first opportunity that Providence offered of making a surrender of himself to Christ, and being received into the number of his people; upon which he *said* unto Philip, *Behold* [*here is*] *water; what should hinder my being baptized*, and becoming from this hour one of your body?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

37 *And Philip said* unto him, *If thou believest with all thine heart* this gospel which I have taught thee, so as cordially to subject thy soul to it, then *it may lawfully* and regularly *be done* without any further delay. *And he answering said, I* firmly and undoubtedly *believe that Jesus Christ*, whom thou hast now been preaching to me, *is* really *the Son of God* [k], and own him for the promised Messiah, who was sent into the world for the salvation of lost sinners; and I desire with all my heart and soul to give myself up to him, that he may save me in his own way.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

38 *And*, upon Philip's declaring his satisfaction in this profession of his faith in Christ, and subjection to him, and readily consenting to receive him as a fellow christian, *he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down to the water* [l]; *both*

[k] *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of GOD.*] It is surprising to see, in how many *ancient copies* and *versions* this verse is omitted. (See Dr. *Mill. in loc.* and the *version* of 1727.) Nevertheless, "says Beza, God forbid, I should think it ought to be expunged, since it contains *such a confession of faith*, as was in the apostolic times *required of the adult*, in order to their being *admitted to baptism.*" Allowing it to be genuine, it fully proves, that Philip had opened to *the eunuch* the doctrine of Christ's divinity; and indeed, if he had not done it, he must have given him *a very imperfect account* of the gospel.

[l] *They both went down to the water.*] Considering how frequently bathing was used in those hot countries, it is not to be wondered, that *baptism* was generally *administered by immersion*, though I see no proof, that it was *essential* to the institution. It would be very unnatural to suppose, that *they went down to the water*, merely that Philip might take up *a little water in his hand* to pour on *the eunuch*. A person of his dignity had, no doubt, *many vessels in his baggage*, on such a journey through so desart a country, a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them,

SECT. XVIII.

both Philip and the eunuch, and there *he baptized him.*

Acts VIII. 39. *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord* [m], which fell upon the eunuch, immediately *snatched away Philip* [n] in a miraculous manner, *and the eunuch saw him no more; for* as it thus appeared that Providence designed they should be separated, he did not attempt to search for him in the neighbouring parts, or to go any where to follow him, how much soever he esteemed his conversation; but getting up again into his chariot, *he went on his way rejoicing;* with an heart full of thankfulness, that he had been favoured with the privilege of so important an interview with him, and that after having received the gospel from his lips, he had seen such a miraculous confirmation of its truth in the sudden manner in which this divinely-commissioned teacher was removed from his sight, to which all his attendants were witnesses.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 *But Philip*, quickly after he was separated from the eunuch, *was found at Azotus*, or Ashdod, a city that was more than thirty miles from Gaza, in the southern part of the country, which had been formerly one of the five governments belonging to the Philistines; (1 Sam. vi. 17.) *and going on from thence he preached the gospel* with great success *in* Joppa, Lydda, Saron, and *all the* other *cities* along the coast of the Mediterranean sea, *till he came to Cæsarea* [o], where Providence directed him to settle for a considerable time. (See Acts xxi. 8, 9.)

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

IMPROVE-

them. (See *Dr. Shaw's Travels*, Pref. p. 4.)

m *The Spirit of the Lord*, which fell upon the eunuch] The Alexandrian *manuscript*, and several other *old copies*, read it Πνευμα αγιον επεσεν επι τον ευνουχον αγγελος δε Κυριου ηρπασε τ. λ. that is, *The Holy Spirit fell upon the eunuch, but an angel of the Lord snatched away Philip.* And therefore, considering also how exceeding probable it is, that a person of his rank, going into a country where *the gospel* was entirely *unknown*, should be furnished for the great work of *preaching it there*, by the *extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit*, I thought fit to insert it in the paraphrase. (See *Dr. Benson's History*, Vol. I. p. 163.) I may here add, that Eusebius assures us, (*Eccles. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 1.) this new convert planted a flourishing church in Ethiopia; and it is a fact, in which all the most ancient *histories of Ethiopia* agree.

n *Snatched away Philip.*] Probably he transported him part of the way through the air, a thing which seems to have happened with respect to some of the prophets. (Compare 1 Kings xviii. 12. 2 Kings ii. 16. Ezek. iii. 14.) The spacious *plain*, which was probably the scene of this *miracle*, would make it so much the more conspicuous; and it would, no doubt, prove a great confirmation of the *eunuch's* faith.

o *To Cæsarea.*] This was a city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which was anciently called *Stratonice*, or *Straton's Tower*, (See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 11. [al. 19.] § 2. & *Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 3. § 4, 5.) It was far distant from Cæsarea Philippi, (of which we read Mat. xvi. 13.) which was situate to the north, in the tribe of Naphthalia, and near the sources of Jordan. See *note* c on Mark viii. 27. Vol. VI. p. 461.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XVIII.

THERE is great reason to adore the gracious councils and purposes of God, with respect to this Ethiopian eunuch; he was *a chosen vessel*, and desiring to improve that weak light which he had, God took effectual methods to impart to him more. Thus *shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord*, (Hos. vi. 3.) An *angel of the Lord* is sent to give directions to an *evangelist* to meet him *in a desart*, and to instruct him *there* in what he had not learnt in his attendance at Jerusalem: And Philip, in obedience to the divine command, immediately *retires* from the more public service he had been engaged in at Samaria, to execute whatever God should please to call him to, though he should order him to *go into a wilderness*, as he could *open* even there *a door of opportunity* to make him useful: and while, like Philip, we govern ourselves by the *intimations of his will*, we shall *not run in vain, nor labour in vain.* (Phil. ii. 16.)

Ver. 26, 27

It was a prudent and exemplary care, especially in a person engaged in such a variety of *public business* as the eunuch was, to improve that vacant space of time which *a journey* allowed him, *in reading* what might edify and instruct him even *as he sat in his chariot:* He chose *the sacred oracles*, and, while perusing them, was in an extraordinary manner *taught of God.* The question which Philip put to him, we should often put to ourselves; *Understandest thou what thou readest?* Let us choose *those writings* which may be worth our study, and then let us labour to *digest them*, and not rest in the *empty amusement* which a few wandering, unconnected, and undigested ideas may give us, while they *pass through our minds* like so many *images* over *a mirror*, leaving no impression at all behind them. The *Scripture* especially will be *worthy of our study*, that we may *understand it;* and we should earnestly pray, that *this study* may be *successful.* For this purpose let us be willing to make use of *proper guides*, though it must be confessed, that none we are like to meet with at present can have a claim to *that authority* with which Philip taught. It is pleasant, nevertheless, with becoming humility, to offer *what assistance we can* to our *fellow-travellers* on such an occasion as this: and God grant that *we who do it*, especially in that way which is most extensive and lasting, may neither be *deceived in scripture ourselves*, nor *deceive others by misrepresenting its sense!*

28

30

31

If we enter into the *true sense* of the *ancient prophecies*, we must undoubtedly see Christ in them, and particularly in that excellent *chapter* of *Isaiah* which the pious *eunuch* was now reading. Let us often view *our divine master* in that amiable and affecting

32, 33

SECT. XVIII. affecting light in which he is here represented; let us view him, though *the Son of God*, by *a generation* which none can fully *declare*, yet *brought to the slaughter as a lamb, and dumb as a sheep before its shearers:* And let us learn patiently *to suffer with him*, if called to it, in humble hope of *reigning with him*, (2 Tim. ii. 12.) even though, like his, *our judgment* also should be *taken away*, and *we* be *cut off from the land of the living*.

Ver. 36—38 Let those who firmly *believe in him as the Son of God*, enter themselves *into his church*, by those *distinguishing solemnities* which he has appointed for that purpose, to which *the greatest* should not think themselves above submitting: Let the *ministers of Christ* readily *admit those* that make a credible profession of *their faith in Jesus*, and of their resolution to be subject to him, *to such ordinances*, not clogging them with any *arbitrary impositions* or demands. And when men are *come to a point* thus solemnly *to give themselves up to the Lord*, and have done it in his appointed method, let them *go on their way rejoicing*, even though providence should *separate from them* those *spiritual guides* who have
39 been owned as the happy instruments of their conversion and their edification.

40 *The servants of Christ* are called to *glorify him* in different scenes and stations of life; happy if in one *state* and *country* or another they may *spread the savour of his name*, and gather in *converts to him*, whether from among *the sons of Israel* or of *Ethiopia*.

SECT. XIX.

Saul, setting out for Damascus, with an intent to persecute the church there, is miraculously converted by our Lord's appearance to him on the way. Acts IX. 1—9.

Acts IX. 1.

SECT. XIX. WE have observed in the preceding history, that the persecution against the disciples
Acts IX. 1. of Jesus was very violent and severe after the death of Stephen[a]; and particularly, that the youth, who was called Saul, distinguished himself by his forwardness in it; insomuch that all the principal members of the church were driven away from Jerusalem, except the apostles. (Sect. 16. Acts viii. 1, 3.) *But Saul* was so exceedingly

Acts IX. 1. AND Saul yet breathing[b] out threaten-

a After the death of Stephen.] There are many disputes, as to the *time* of Paul's *conversion*. The learned Spanheim advances several arguments to prove, that it happened *six* or *seven* years *after* Christ's *death*, about the *fourth* year of Caligula, *A. D.* 40. I rather think with Dr. Benson, (agreeably to Bp. Pearson's Chronology,) that it was a pretty deal *sooner*, but that the exact time cannot be fixed from any circumstances transmitted to us.

b *Breathing*

threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

exceedingly outrageous in his zeal against the gospel, that he could not be satisfied with this; his very heart was set upon extirpating the followers of Jesus, and like some ravenous and savage beast he was *still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord*[b]: In every word he spoke he menaced their destruction, and as if all the hardships of exile and imprisonment were too little, with a most cruel eagerness he thirsted for their blood. With this intent he *came to the high-priest*[c], whom he knew to be much exasperated against them.

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

And petitioned for letters from him in the name of the whole Sanhedrim, (chap. xxii. 5. xxvi. 12.) directed *to the* rulers of the Jewish *synagogues at Damascus*, whither (as he had been informed) some of those distressed refugees had fled, *that if he found any of that way* there, *whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem*, to be proceeded against in the severest manner by the Sanhedrim.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.

And as he was proceeding on his journey, and was now *come near to Damascus*[d], it being just about the middle of the day, a wonderful event happened, which threw the whole course of his life into a different channel, and was attended with the most important consequences both to him and the church; for *on a sudden a great light from heaven shone around him*[e], exceeding the

b *Breathing out threatenings and slaughter.*] This is an exceeding *emphatical* expression, as Elsner has well shewn in his illustration of it; but it will not prove, that he was able to accomplish *the death* of many of the Christians, though he might *threaten it* with almost every *breath*. It must increase his rage to hear, that those, whom he had been instrumental in driving from Jerusalem, were so successful in spreading the religion he was so eager to root out.

c *Came to the high-priest.*] The person now in that office seems to have been Caiaphas the inveterate enemy of Christ, who had so great a hand in his death. He would therefore gladly employ so active and bigotted a zealot as Saul; and it is well known, that the *Sanhedrim*, however its capital power might be abridged by the Romans, was the supreme Jewish *court*, and had great influence and authority among their *synagogues* abroad.

d *Come near to Damascus.*] Witsius has given us a large and entertaining account of this city, in his *Life of Paul*, cap. ii. § 2. It was the *capital city* of Syria, (Isa. vii. 8.) and abounded so much with Jews, that Josephus assures us *ten thousand* of them were *massacred* there in one hour, and at another time *eighteen thousand* with their wives and children. *Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 20. [al. 25.] § 2. *& lib.* vii. *cap.* 8. [al. 28.] § 7.

e *A light from heaven shone around him.*] This was occasioned by the *rays of glory* which darted from the body of *our Lord*. Some have thought, that Saul, being a learned Jew, would easily know this to be the *shekinah*, or visible token and symbol of the divine presence, and that he therefore cries, *Who art thou, Lord?* though he saw *no human form*. (See *Lord Barrington's Miscell. Sacra.* Essay iii. p. 5.) But I think, the question implies, he *did not know* who or what he was, and that it is plain from chap. xxii. 14, and other texts, that he *did see*, amidst this glory, *a human form*, which yet he might not at first imagine to be that of

SECT. XIX.

Acts IX. 4.

the lustre of the meridian sun; (chap. xxii. 6. xxvi. 13.) *And* such was the effect this wonderful appearance had upon him, that *he fell to the ground*, being struck from the beast on which he rode, as all that travelled with him likewise were, (chap. xxvi. 14; *and* to his great astonishment he *heard a* loud and distinct *voice saying unto him* in the Hebrew language,

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice, saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 *Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? And* as he saw at the same time the bright appearance of some glorious person in a human form, *he* was possessed with awe and reverence, and *said, Who art thou, Lord?* and what is it that I have done against thee? *And the Lord* Jesus, (for it was he who had condescended to appear to him on this occasion.) *said, I am* that *Jesus* [*the Nazarene,*][f] *whom*, by the opposition thou art making to my gospel, and by thy cruelty to my disciples, *thou* madly *persecutest:* (chap. xxii. 8.) but remember, [*it is*] *hard for thee to kick against the goads*[g], and all thy fury can only wound thyself, without being able to do me or my cause any real injury.

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: *It is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 *And* when Saul heard and saw, that he who had so often been affronted and despised by him, even that Jesus of Nazareth whom he had so blasphemously and virulently opposed, was such a glorious and powerful person, and yet that, instead of destroying him immediately as he might with ease have done, he had condescended thus compassionately to expostulate with him, his mind was almost overborne with an unutterable

6 And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord,

of Jesus, though Stephen had, probably in his hearing, declared that he *saw a vision* of this kind, chap. vii. 55, 56. Elsner supposes with De Dieu, that this was *lightning*, and the voice *thunder*, and is large in *shewing*, how generally the Heathens thought such *phænomena* to attend the appearance of their deities.

[f] *I am Jesus the Nazarene.*] So it is that the words are related, (chap. xxii. 8.) and there seems something *peculiarly pointed* in this expression. A pretended *Messiah from Nazareth* had, no doubt, often been the subject of his blasphemous derision; *our Lord* therefore uses *that title*, more effectually to humble and mortify him.

[g] *It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.*] Dr. Hammond truly observes, that this is *a proverbial expression* of impotent rage, which hurts one's self, and not that against which it was levelled.——It is no great matter, whether the latter part of *this verse* and the beginning of the *next*, (which clause is *omitted* in many ancient *copies* and *versions*,) were originally here, or whether (as Dr. Mill supposes) it were not, since it certainly is found in the parallel passages, chap. xxii. 8. xxvi. 14. But I think it most probable, it was *accidentally omitted* in some *very old copy*, whence the rest were taken, and that the omission was occasioned by the *transcriber* mistaking the words, ὁ κυριος, *ver.* 6, for the like words in ver. 5, a thing which might easily happen in transcribing.—I hope, I need make *no apology* for giving the reader, in the *first view* of this wonderful and delightful story, a full account of it in a kind of *compound text*, in which all the circumstances, added by Paul himself elsewhere, are inserted in one continued narration. But I reserve *the notes* on the passages so brought in, till we come to the chapters to which they belong.

[h] *Stood*

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

able mixture of contending passions; so that *trembling* at the thought of what he had done, *and amazed* at the glorious appearance of Jesus, *he said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* For instead of carrying my mad opposition any farther, I with all humility resign myself entirely to thy disposal, and humbly wait the intimations of thy sacred pleasure, determined to submit to whatsoever thou shalt order me. *And the Lord said unto him, Arise*, and stand upon thy feet, *and go into the city, and* I will take care that *it shall* there *be told thee what thou must do*, and thou shalt be instructed in all things which I have appointed concerning thee; (chap. xxii. 10; xxvi. 16.) "*For I have* thus *appeared unto thee for this purpose, to* constitute and *ordain thee a minister* and servant to me, in the great work of propagating my gospel, *and* to appoint thee *a witness both of those things which thou hast* now *seen, and of those in which I will* hereafter *manifest myself unto thee:* And in the testimony thou shalt give, I will be with thee to protect thee by my power and providence, *delivering thee* in the midst of a thousand dangers *from the* malice of the Jewish *people, and* of *the Gentiles; to whom*, as the one or the other may come in thy way, *I now send thee.* That I may make thee instrumental *to open their* blind *eyes, and to turn* [*them*] *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may* thus *receive* the free and full *forgiveness of* all their most aggravated *sins, and* may have *an inheritance among them that are sanctified by* means of that *faith which is in me.*"

SECT. XIX.

Acts IX. 6.

Acts XXVI.—16. For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Acts XXVI. 16

17

18

Acts IX. 7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

And the men who travelled with him, upon their rising from the ground, to which they had been struck upon the first appearance of the light from heaven, *stood* in a fixed posture perfectly *astonished*[h], and seemed for a while to be turned (as it were) into statues: And they were so confounded, that they uttered not a word, *hearing indeed the* sound of that *voice* which

Acts IX. 7.

[h] *Stood* perfectly *astonished.*] To *stand astonished* does indeed sometimes signify merely *to be astonished*, without any reference to the particular *posture*, as Beza, L'Enfant, and others have observed. So in our English phrase, to *stand in jeopardy* is to *be in jeopardy*, 1 Cor. xv. 30; and to *stand in doubt* is to *be in doubt*, Gal. iv. 20. (Compare Mat. xii. 46; Mark ix. 1; John i. 26; Acts iv. 10; and many other places.) But the expression here may be *literally true*, and in that interpretation seems to convey the more lively idea.

SECT. XIX.

which had spoken to Saul[i], without distinctly understanding the sense of what was said, (chap. xxii. 9.) *but seeing no one*[k], nor perceiving who it was that had been speaking to him.

Acts IX. 8. *But Saul*, when he had seen this heavenly vision, *arose from the earth; and though his eyes were open, he* was incapable of discerning objects, and *saw no* one *man* of those who stood near him; for his nerves were so affected with the glory of that light which had shone from the body of Jesus, that he had lost the power of sight, (chap. xxii. 11.) *But they* that were with him *led him by the hand*, as it would not be safe for him to ride in such a condition, *and*

9 *brought him to Damascus. And he was* at his lodgings there *three days without sight*[l], *and* during all that time he *neither eat nor drank*[m], but lay for a considerable part of it as in a trance, in which he saw some extraordinary visions, particularly of Ananias who was to visit him, (compare ver. 12;) and the remainder of it he employed in such deep humiliation and humble earnest prayer, as suited his past guilt, and his present astonishing circumstances.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

IMPROVE-

[i] *Hearing the voice,*] Beza, Vatablus, and Clarius think, they heard Saul's *voice*, But not that of Christ. Dr. Hammond, that they heard *the thunder*, not the *articulate sound* which attended it. Dr. Benson, as ακουω often signifies to *understand*, supposes these attendants were Hellenist Jews, who did not understand the Hebrew, which was the language in which Christ spake. But I think with Dr. Whitby, that the most probable way of reconciling this with chap. xxii 9; is that which is expressed in the *paraphrase*, and that it is confirmed by John xii. 29, when some, present at *the voice from heaven* which came to Christ, took it for *thunder*. See *Mr. Biscoe, at Boyle's Lect. p.* 665. 666.

[k] *But seeing no one*] So it was with *the men who were with* Daniel, when he *saw the vision*, (Dan. x. 7.) And the Heathens, however they came by the notion, thought *their deities* often rendered themselves *visible to one only*, in a company consisting of many. See *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. 1. p. 403—405.

[l] *Without sight.*] *Scales* grew over *his eyes*, not only to intimate to him *the blindness* of the state he had been in, but to impress him also with a deeper sense of the *almighty power* of Christ, and to *turn his thoughts inward*, while he was rendered less capable of conversing with external objects. This would also be a manifest token to *others* of what had happened to him *in his journey*, and ought to have been very convincing and humbling to those *bigotted* Jews, to whom, as the most probable *associates* in the cruel work he intended, *the Sanhedrim* had directed *those letters*, which Saul would no doubt *destroy* as soon as possible.

[m] *Neither eat nor drank.*] Grotius and some later writers think, this was *a voluntary fast*, in token of *his deep humiliation* for the guilt he had contracted by opposing the gospel; but it might very possibly be the result of that *bodily disorder*, into which he was thrown by *the vision*, and of the attachment of his mind to those new and astonishing *divine revelations*, with which during this time he seems to have been favoured.—Whether *those discoveries*, mentioned 2 Cor. xii. 1, *and seq.* and Gal. 1, 11, *& seq.* were made *at this time*, is matter of some debate, and may be examined in a more proper place.

SECT. XIX.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us pause a little on this most amazing instance of the power and sovereignty of *divine grace* in our blessed *Redeemer*, and adore and rejoice in its illustrious triumph. Who of all the *enemies* of *Christ*, and of *his church* seemed ripest for *tenfold vengeance?* Whose name will be transmitted to posterity as the name of the person who most barbarously *ravaged* the innocent *sheep* and *lambs* of *Christ's flock*, and, like the ravenous wolf, most insatiably *thirsted for their blood?* Whose very *breath* was *threatenings and slaughter against them*, and the business of his life *their calamity* and *destruction?* Who but Saul; the very man for whom, under another name and character, we have contracted (if I may be allowed the expression) that tenderness of *holy friendship*, that next to that of *his divine Master* his name is written on our very hearts; and whom, though once *the chiefest of sinners*, we reverence as *the greatest of the apostles*, and love as *the dearest of saints!* Ver. 1

Thy thoughts, O Lord, *are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways.* (Isai. lv. 8.) He had Damascus in view, which was 3
to be the scene of new oppressions and cruelties; he was, it may be, that very moment, anticipating in thought *the havock* he should there make, when, behold, *the light of the Lord* breaks in upon them, and Jesus *the Son of God* condescends in person to 4
appear to him, to expostulate with him! And how tender the expostulation! *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Tender to Saul, tender to *all his people;* for it expresses his union with them, his participation in their interests; so that he *looks upon himself* as injured by those that injure them, as wounded by those that wound them.

Who, in this view, does not see at once the guilt and madness, and misery of *persecutors?* They have undertaken a dreadful task indeed, and will find it *hard to kick against the pricks;* 5
they will surely find it so when Jesus appears to them *in that vengeance* which he here laid aside; when he sits on his awful tribunal to *make inquisition for blood*, and to *visit upon them* all their inhumanities and all their impieties.

But here our merciful *Redeemer* chose to display *the triumphs of his grace*, rather than *the terrors of his wrath;* and, behold how sudden *a transformation* it wrought! Behold Saul, who had so insolently assaulted his throne, now *prostrate at his feet!* sur- 6
rendering, as it were, *at discretion;* presenting *a blank*, that Jesus might write *his own terms*, and *saying*, as every one who is indeed the trophy of divine grace will say, *Lord, what wilt thou*

SECT. XIX.

have me to do? As ready to employ all his powers *for the service of Christ* as he had ever before been to arm them *for the destruction of his church.*

7 What must *the attendants of his journey* think on such an occasion? If *they* were also *converted*, here were *farther witnesses* added to Christianity, and more *monuments of divine grace* erected; but if they were *not converted*, what an instance was this of *their hardness and obstinacy?* and even though *their bodily sight* was 8 continued, how much was *their blindness* worse than *his!* Let us pray that we may all be *taught of God;* and if we are brought to *resign ourselves to God* in sincerity and truth, let us acknowledge the internal operations of *his grace*, as that to which the victory is owing, even where external circumstances have been most remarkable.

9 The situation in which Saul lay seems indeed to have been very melancholy, *his sight* lost, *his appetite for food* gone, and all his soul wrapt up in deep astonishment, or melted in deep contrition and remorse; but though he might *sow in tears*, he *reaped in joy*, (Psal. cxxvi. 5.) It appears that *light and gladness* were *sown for him.* He came refined *out of the furnace*, and these *three* dark and dismal *days* are, no doubt, recollected by him in the heavenly world, as *the æra* from whence he dates the first beamings of that *divine light* in which he now dwells. Let us never be afraid of the pangs of that *godly sorrow*, which, *working repentance to salvation not to be repented of*, will soon be ten thousand times overbalanced by that *exceeding weight of glory*, and those full transports of *eternal joy*, for which it will prepare the soul.

SECT. XX.

Christ sends Ananias to Saul to restore his sight; Saul is baptized, and having preached the gospel at Damascus and Jerusalem, to avoid the rage of the Jews is sent by the disciples to Tarsus. Acts IX. 10—31.

Acts IX. 10.

SECT. XX.

Acts IX. 10.

NOW while Saul lay blind at Damascus, in those melancholy circumstances which have been just described, it pleased the Lord, on the third day, to provide for his comfort and instruction: for *there was a certain disciple at Damascus, whose name was Ananias*[a], and he was

Acts IX. 10.

AND there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, and to him said

[a] *Whose name was Ananias.*] As we read of Ananias only in this story, it is difficult to determine who he was. Dr Benson thinks him to have been *a native* of

said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold I *am here* Lord.

was a pious man according to the strictest precepts of the law, and had an honourable character among all the Jews who dwelt in the city, as well as among the disciples of Jesus, to whom he was allied in the strictest bonds: (chap. xxii. 12.) *And the Lord* appeared and *said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I* [*am here,*] *Lord,* ready to receive and execute thy commands. *And* upon this *the Lord* [*said*] *to him, Arise, and go to that which is called the Straight Street, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus, whose name is Saul; for behold, he is* now *praying* with great earnestness and affection; and I have compassion upon him, and am determined to send him immediate relief: *And* accordingly *he hath* just now *seen* thee *in a vision*[b], as *a man whose name* it has been intimated to him *is Ananias;* and this person has been miraculously represented to him, as *coming in, and laying his hand upon him, that he might recover his sight,* which by a very extraordinary occurrence he has for the present lost.

SECT. XX.

Acts IX. 10.

11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for *one* called Saul of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth,

11

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

12

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.

And Ananias, astonished to hear such a name, mentioned in such a connection, *answered, Lord,* is it possible thou shouldst send me on any message of favour to Saul of Tarsus? *I have heard of many concerning this man* even at this distance, how violent a persecutor he has been, and *how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem;*

13

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that call on thy name.

And I am credibly informed, that he is now come hither to Damascus with an intent to persecute thy people *here,* and that *he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name,* and to carry them prisoners to Jerusalem to be tried there.

14

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for

But the Lord said unto him, Ananias, thou canst not imagine that I am ignorant of any of these things, or that it is for thee to debate my sovereign

15

of Jerusalem, and one who had carried the *gospel* from thence to Damascus. (*Hist.* Vol. I. p. 168.) Some of the *ancients* say, he was one of the *seventy disciples.* Others, from his being called *a devout man according to the law,* (chap. xxii. 12,) have thought he was *a proselyte of righteousness,* as it is usual *now* to speak. Perhaps he was *a native of* Damascus, converted at the first *Pentecost,* when the *Holy Spirit descended,* and honoured with this embassy to Saul, as a Christian of the oldest standing in that place, and so, very probably *an officer of the church* there; which the commission to *baptise him* may farther intimate.

[b] *And he hath seen,* &c.] Mr. L'Enfant and several others think, these are *the words of the historian,* and therefore should be included in a *parenthesis,* and rendered *And he,* i. e. *Saul, saw a man,* &c. But then I should think *his name* would have been expressed, Και ο Σαυλ@· ειδεν κ. τ. λ.

SECT. XX.

Acts IX. 15.

sovereign determinations; *Go thy way*, and execute immediately that message of mercy with which I have charged thee, *for* how great and aggravated soever his former transgressions may have been, I assure thee that *this* very *man is to me a chosen vessel* [c], whom I have by my free and sovereign grace ordained *to bear my name* as an apostle, and to preach my gospel; the truth of which he shall maintain with the greatest fidelity and courage *before* the Gentile *nations and* their *kings* [d], *and* before *the children of Israel*, and shall be made an instrument of eminent ser-

for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

16 vice: *For I will* immediately introduce him into a scene of action quite different from what he hath hitherto known, and will *shew him how many things he* who has done so much to oppose and injure my cause *must* at length *suffer for my name* [e]; and he shall undergo them all with such cheerfulness, as shall render him an example to my saints in all the remotest ages of my church.

16 For I will shew him, how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 *And* upon this *Ananias* presumed not to object any farther, but with all readiness and joy undertook the message: He *went* therefore, *and entered into the house* to which he had been so particularly directed; and being introduced to the person whom he was sent to visit, *and laying his hands upon him, he said*, My dear *brother Saul*, for I most readily own thee under that relation, *the Lord*, [*even*] *Jesus who appeared to thee on the way as thou camest* hither to Damascus, *hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight*,

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight,

[c] *A chosen vessel.*] Beza justly observes, that *an instrument* of building, agriculture, &c. is often in Greek called σκεῦος; and the word may very probably have *that signification* here. One would think, none who knew Saul's *character* before his conversion could imagine, there was *so much merit* and *excellence* in it, as that he should *on this account* be spoken of by Christ, as *a choice* or *singular valuable person*: (Compare 1 Tim. i. 13—15.) Yet this has been hinted of late, though the *apostle* speaks of himself as *separated from his mother's womb*, Gal. i. 15, which, in concurrence with many other *Scriptures*, shews, how much more natural and reasonable it is, to acquiesce in the obvious and common interpretation we have given.

[d] *Before* the Gentile *nations*, &c.] Ananias could not infer from hence, that the *gospel* was to be *preached to the Gentiles*, while they continued *uncircumcised*, and so *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, &c. (a mystery, which Peter did not yet know;) for Christ might have used these expressions, had Paul been brought *before Heathen kings* for preaching him as the Messiah to the Jews and *proselytes*.

[e] *I will shew him how many things he must suffer*, &c.] If (as Grotius seems to think,) this intimates that Saul should presently have *a revelation*, and perhaps *a visionary representation* of *all his sufferings* among Jews and Gentiles, by land and sea, in tumults and imprisonments, of which *this book* and *his epistles* give so large a description: it must appear a most heroic instance of *courage* and *zeal*, that with such a view he should offer himself to *baptism*, and go on so steadily in his *ministerial work*. Never sure was there, on that supposition, an exacter image of Jesus, who so resolutely persevered in *his work*, though he *knew all things* that were to come upon him.

[f] *Something*

sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit, which shall be poured out upon thee in a miraculous way, before I leave this place. " For *the God* *of our fathers hath*, in his secret and mysterious counsels, *fore-ordained thee to know his will, and to see that righteous person* whom our ungrateful nation hath crucified, *and to hear* as thou hast done *the voice from his* own *mouth*, though he be now returned to the celestial glory: *For thou shalt be his* faithful and successful *witness*, and shalt be employed to testify *unto all men* the truth *of those things which thou hast* already *seen and heard*, and of those which he shall hereafter reveal unto thee. *And now, why* *dost thou delay* a moment longer? *Arise, and be baptized, and* thereby express thy desire to *wash away thy sins, invoking the name of the Lord* Jesus Christ, that illustrious and divine name, which thou hast formerly opposed and blasphemed."

SECT. XX.

Acts XXII. 14.— The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth.

Acts XXII. 14

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.

15

16 And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

16

Acts IX. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

And immediately, as soon as Ananias had entered the place and laid his hands upon him, *there fell from his eyes* [*something*] *like scales*[f]; *and he presently recovered his sight, and* upon this *arose, and was baptized:* And presently after this, he received the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit[g], by which he was much more particularly instructed in the contents of the gospel, and fitted to communicate it with the greatest advantage to others.

Acts IX. 18.

19 And when he had received

And having received *food*, after a long abstinence, *he was* quickly *strengthened*

19

[f] *Something like scales.*] Perhaps the outward coat of his eyes might be scorched with the *lightning*; and what fell from them might have some resemblance to the small *scales* of fishes.——Grotius thinks, this was an emblem of the *darkness* and *prejudice*, which before veiled his eyes; and their *falling off* intimated the *clearer views* of divine things, which he should for the future enjoy.

[g] He received the Holy Spirit] We are sure from ver. 12, that *the laying on of Ananias' hands* was introductory to *Saul's receiving his sight*; and, as this is connected with his *receiving the Holy Spirit* in ver. 17. it is reasonable to conclude, that they were both conferred at this time. Yet it seems evident, that the *recovery of his sight* preceded, and the *effusion of the Spirit* followed, *his baptism*; so that Ananias must have *laid hands on him* twice, if that action of his attended the *descent of the Spirit* on Saul: and it is the more probable *it did not*, as we do not elsewhere find, that any but the *apostles* had the power of conferring it. (See chap. viii. 16, 17.) Dr. Benson has illustrated this by a variety of ingenious arguments, and is particular in his conjectures (perhaps too minutely pursued,) as to the several *gifts* which were now communicated. (*Hist.* Vol. I. p. 171—180.) We are sure, he had an ample *revelation* of the *Christian scheme*; otherwise he could not have been *qualified* to preach it as he did: (Compare Gal. i. 12. 1 Cor. xi, 23. xv. 3.) And we particularly find, he was enlightened in the sense of the *Old Testament prophecies*. He had also, no doubt, many other *miraculous gifts* and *powers*, besides that of *speaking with tongues*; But whether these were *given* (so far as they were statedly resident in him,) *instantaneously* or *gradually*, I think we cannot certainly determine. Some *miraculous effects* did, beyond all doubt, immediately appear.

[h] *Immediately*

SECT. XX.

strengthened, and recovered his former health and vigour; which it was his immediate care to employ in the service of his new master.

received meat, he was strengthened.—

Acts IX. 19. *And* as things now appeared to *Saul* in quite another light than they had done before, his disposition was entirely changed: and he associated with those whom he had come to persecute, and *was for several days with the disciples*

—Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 *at Damascus. And immediately* after his conversion, *he preached Christ in the Synagogues*[h], with great freedom and zeal, and proved by incontestable arguments *that he is the Son of God*,

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 *And all that heard him were astonished, and said, Is not this he who in Jerusalem* was so exceeding zealous in his opposition to this way, as to *spread desolation among them who called on this* very *name? and* who *came hither* also *to this end, that he might* seize on all the followers of Jesus, whom he could find, and *carry them bound to the chief priests?* Whence then proceeds such

21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 an unaccountable change? *But Saul*, perceiving there was such particular notice taken of the matter, and hoping that his testimony might have so much the more weight, in consequence of the knowledge which they had of his former character, *was strengthened* and animated *so much the more* in his zeal and activity; *and confounded the* unbelieving *Jews that dwelt at Damascus*, confirming and *evincing* with the fullest evidence, *that this* Jesus of Nazareth *is* indeed *the Messiah*.

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ.

23 *And when many days were fulfilled*, in which several events happened which are elsewhere hinted at; and particularly, after he had made an excursion into Arabia to spread the gospel there, and returned to Damascus again, (Gal. i. 16—18,) *the Jews*, finding it was impossible to answer his arguments, or to damp his zeal, resolved to attempt another way to silence him, and, that they might effectually accomplish it *conspired*

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

[h] *Immediately he preached Christ*, &c.] Dr. Wells *(Script. Geog.* Vol. III. p. 375, *& in loc.)* says, that, as soon as Saul had strength to go any where abroad, he retired into the desart of Arabia, where he supposes him to have been favoured with the *full revelation* of Christianity, and to have spent some considerable time in devotion; after which he returned to Damascus, and preached; which he argues from Gal. i. 16, 17. But that seems inconsistent with what is here said of his *preaching immediately*. I therefore imagine, his going into Arabia (to which Damascus now belonged,) was his making excursions from that city into the neighbouring parts of the country, and perhaps taking a large circuit about it, which might be his employment between the time in which he began to preach in Damascus, and his quitting it after repeated labours there to go to Jerusalem.

[i] The

SECT. XX.

Acts IX. 24.

24 But their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

conspired to kill him[i]. *But* Providence so ordered it, that *their design was* happily discovered and *made known to Saul*, who therefore kept himself concealed, and would not give them any opportunity to execute their purpose; *and* though *they watched* all *the gates* of the city continually[k] and some assassin or other was waiting at each of them *day and night, to* attack and *murder him* if he should offer to retire from thence, yet they could not compass their cruel design. *But* as his present situation was still judged unsafe, and it was no way proper he should be thus confined, *the* other *disciples* of Jesus, anxious to preserve a life of so much value, *took him by night, and let him down by* the side of *the wall in a basket*, and so dismissed him; heartily committing him to the divine protection, by the assistance of which he escaped the hands of those blood-thirsty Jews that were lurking about the gates. (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.)

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket.

25

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

And when Saul was come from Damascus *to Jerusalem*[l], *he* immediately *attempted to associate with the disciples; but they all feared him, not believing that he*, who had signalized himself so much by his rage against the church, *was* indeed *a disciple;* but suspecting that the change he professed was an artifice to work himself into their confidence[m], and by that means

26

i *The Jews conspired to kill him.*] What an amazing instance is this of the *malignity* of these wretched creatures, that, when *so great a persecutor* was by a voice and appearance from heaven, *converted to Christianity*, they should be so far from following his example, that they should attempt to *take away his life.* In this design they were assisted by *the governor* of the city under Aretas king of Arabia, (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33,) by whatever revolution it had come into his hands, after having been conquered by the Romans under Pompey: (*Jos. Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 2. [al. 4.] § 3.) See *Dr. Benson's Hist.* Vol. I. p. 196.

k *They watched* all *the gates* of the city.] This shews, there were *great numbers* engaged in this bloody design; for Damascus was a large city, and had *many gates.* It seems that the Jews had not now so much power there, as they had when Saul was dispatched from the Sanhedrim; otherwise he might have been seized, and carried to Jerusalem, by some such *commission* as he himself had borne. But they had some interest in Aretas' *deputy*, and therefore endeavoured to compass his death by this indirect method. See *Miscl. Sacra.* Vol. I. *Abstract*, p. 15.

l *When Saul was come to Jerusalem.*] This is the journey of which he speaks, Gal. i. 18. in which he formed his first acquaintance with Peter, the great *apostle of the circumcision:* But it is plain, as Mr. Cradock well observes, (in his excellent *Apost. Hist.* p. 55.) he went not to *acknowledge his supremacy*, but [ἱστορῆσαι,] to see and *converse with him* as a brother and fellow-labourer: and it seems by the expression, ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτόν, that he *lodged with him.*

m Suspecting that the change he professed was an artifice, &c.] It may seem strange, that so remarkable an event as Saul's *conversion* should be concealed so long from the Christians at Jerusalem: But it is to be considered, that there were not then such conveniences of *correspondence* between one place and another, as we now have; and the *war* then subsisting between Herod Antipas and Aretas, (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 5, [al. 7.] § 1.) might have *interrupted that* between Damascus and Jerusalem: not to

SECT. XX.

means to have it in his power to detect and ruin a greater number of persons. *But Barnabas*, whose information had been more ex-

Acts IX. 27. press and particular, *taking him* by the hand with an endearing friendship [n], *brought him to the apostles* Peter and James, the rest being then absent from Jerusalem [o]; *and* he *related to them how he had seen the Lord* Jesus Christ *in the way* to Damascus, *and that he had spoken to him* in a manner which had sweetly conquered all his former prejudices against the gospel; *and how*, in consequence of that change which was then made in his views and in his heart, *he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus* even at the apparent hazard of his life.

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 On this they gladly received him into their number, and into their most intimate friendship, *and he was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem*, for a little more than a fortnight, (Gal. i. 18.) *and* with the greatest freedom he there bore his testimony to the gospel, *preaching* as *boldly* and as publicly *in the name of the Lord Jesus* as he had done before at Damascus.

28 And he was with them coming in, and going out at Jerusalem.

29 *And he spake and disputed*, not only with the natives of Judea, but also *with the Hellenists*, or with those foreign Jews who used the Greek language [p], and came out of other parts to worship

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians:

to urge, that the *unbelieving* Jews, in order to prevent the argument which the Christians might draw from Saul's *conversion*, might very probably affect to give themselves *mysterious airs*, as if he was only acting a *concerted part*; sure to find their account in such a pretence, by mortifying the *disciples*, and bringing Saul into suspicion.

[n] *Barnabas taking him*, &c.] Some have said, I know not on what evidence, that Barnabas was an old acquaintance of Saul, and had been formerly *his fellow-student*. under Gamaliel. (See *Reading's Life of Christ*, p. 565.) Perhaps he might have seen Ananias, or some other witness of peculiar credit, on whose testimony he introduced him. It is evident, a most faithful and tender *friendship* was established between them from this time.

[o] *To the apostles* Peter and James, &c. Paul himself tells us, that on his going up to Jerusalem he *saw no other of the apostles*, Gal. i. 19. Beza well observes, we are quite uncertain on what occasion the rest were then absent from Jerusalem. Had they been *there*, though Saul stayed but about *a fortnight*, he would no doubt have seen them.

[p] Jews who used the Greek language.] So the *Syriac version* with great propriety explains the word *Hellenists*: of whom see *note* [a] on Acts vi. 1. § 12. Vol. VII. p. 564. I know not on what authority Epiphanius (as quoted by Beza on this text) asserts, that these Hellenists endeavoured to revenge themselves on Saul, by reporting every where, that his *conversion to Christianity* was the result of a disappointment in his addresses to the daughter of Caiaphas the high-priest, as her father would not accept him for *a son-in-law*. If they told such an idle *story*, it must however imply, that they thought Saul a person of some rank, to have been capable of forming any such pretension.

[q] *Conducted him to Cæsarea.*] I should have concluded, this had been the celebrated *city of that name* on the Mediterranean Sea, so often mentioned afterwards and from whence he might so easily have passed by ship to Tarsus, had not Paul himself told us, he went through the *regions of Syria and Cilicia*, (Gal. i. 21.) which

Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

worship at Jerusalem, as being earnestly desirous that they might carry along with them the knowlèdge of Christ into their own lands: *But* some of them were so enraged at this unexpected opposition from one on whom they had so great a dependance, that *they attempted to kill him. And the brethren being informed [of it]* judged it necessary to consult his safety without any delay; and therefore several of them *conducted him to Cæsarea* q with such dispatch, that he had not an opportunity of enjoying any interview with the churches in Judea which lay in his way, (Gal. i. 22.) *and* from thence they *sent him away* with proper recommendations *to Tarsus*, the noble capital of Cilicia, and his native place, where they apprehended he might meet with some support from his relations, and pursue the work of God with some considerable advantage; which he accordingly did.

SECT. XX. Acts XI. 29. 30

30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking

Then the several *churches* that were formed *through all Judea, and* those more lately planted in *Galilee and Samaria, being* greatly *edified* r by the seals that were set to the truth of the gospel, and by the confirmation of the news of Saul's conversion, (though they could not enjoy the benefit of his personal labours,) not only advanced in Christian knowledge and holiness, but *had* also an happy interval of external *rest*s, as several circumstances in the civil state of the Jews at that time concurred, either to appease their enemies, or to engage them to attend to what 31

which intimates, that he went *by land*, and makes it probable that it was Cæsarea Philippi near the borders of Syria, which is here spoken of. Compare note o on Acts viii. 40. p. 30.

r *Being edified.*] I follow Beza's construction of this intricate verse, as most agreeable to the Greek *idiom*, and refer the reader to Dr. Hammond's learned *note* on the word οἰκοδομούμενοι, *edified*, for an account of that *figurative expression*, which is properly a term of *architecture*.

s *Had rest.*] This is by no means to be ascribed merely, or chiefly, to Saul's *conversion*, who, though a great zealot, was but *one young man*, and whose personal danger, proves *the persecution*, in some measure, to have continued at least three years after it. I conclude therefore, the period spoken of is that, which commenced at, or quickly after, his setting out for Cilicia, and entirely acquiesce in Mr. Lardner's most judicious observation, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2. § 12. Vol. I. p. 203—210.) that this *repose of the Christians* might be occasioned by the general alarm which was given to the Jews, [about A. D. 40.] when Petronius by the order of Caligula, (incensed by some affront said to have been offered him by the Alexandrian Jews,) attempted to bring *the statue* of that emperor among them, and to *set it up in the holy of holies*; a horrid prophanation, which the whole people deprecated with the greatest concern in the most solicitous and affectionate manner. (See *Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 10. [al. 9.] *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 8. [al. 11.] *Philo. de Legat. ad Cai.* p. 1024. and the large account given of the *State of the Jews* at this time by Dr. Benson, *Hist.* Vol. I. p. 201—210. How long this rest continued, we do not certainly know, probably till Herod interrupted it, as we shall see hereafter, chap. xii.

t *The*

SECT. XX.

what immediately concerned themselves. *And* as the followers of Jesus were not corrupted by this respite, but continued with exemplary devotion and zeal *walking in the fear of the Lord, and* evidently appeared to be in an extraordinary manner supported by the aids, and animated by the *consolation of the Holy Spirit*[t], they *were* considerably *multiplied* by a new accession of members, whereby the damage sustained in the late persecution was abundantly repaired.

Acts IX. 31.

ing in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10—12 How admirable was the condescension and care of our blessed *Redeemer*, in sending good Ananias thus early as a messenger of comfort and peace to Saul in his darkness and distress. We 13—14 cannot wonder at the *objections* which were at first ready to rise in his mind, but must surely yield to the great authority by which 15 they were overborne; *go thy way, he is a chosen vessel.* Thus does it become us to acquiesce in all *our Lord* appoints, in pur- 17 suance of the schemes of his *electing love;* and thus should we with *brotherly affection*, like that of this holy man, be ready to embrace even *the greatest of sinners*, when they are brought in humility to a Saviour's feet.

But when he is thus glorifying his power and his grace, what 18 gratitude and love may he justly expect from those that are the happy objects of it? When *the scales* are *fallen from their eyes*, when they have given themselves up to him in the solemn *seals of his covenant*, when they have received the communications of *his Holy Spirit*, how solicitous should they be to *love much*, in proportion to the degree in which *they have been forgiven?* (Luke 19, 20 vii. 47.) And with what zeal and readiness should they *immediately* apply themselves, from a principle of *gratitude to Christ*, and of *compassion to sinners*, to *declare that way of salvation* into which they have been directed; and, so far as they have opportunity, whether under a more public or private character, to *lead others* unto that *Jesus* on whom they have themselves believed.

22 And now, let us with sacred pleasure behold *the progress of grace* in the heart of Saul: Let us view him *rising from his bed of languishing*

t *The consolation of the Holy Spirit.*] Some think παρακλησει signifies in the general *patronage* and *assistance*, as it well may, and therefore in the *paraphrase* I have expressed both.——De Dieu takes great pains to prove, that πορευομενοι τω φοβω-επληθυνοντο, signifies, that *they advanced more and more in religion*, &c. But it seems much more natural to explain it of the *accession made to their numbers*, in consequence of that advancement in picty, &c.

languishing with a soul inflamed with love and zeal, *testifying the gospel of Christ*, and *confounding the Jews that dwelt at Damascus*· Let us behold him *running the hazard of his life* there, while their obstinate hearts refused to receive or endure such a testimony; and then *returning to Jerusalem*, desiring to *join himself to* the company of *those* whom he had once despised and persecuted; and on that most public theatre, under the very eyes of that Sanhedrim from which he had received his bloody commission, *openly bearing his testimony* to that *gospel* which he had so eagerly attempted to tear up by the roots. Thence let us view him travelling to Tarsus, and visiting *his native country*, with a most earnest desire to fill Cilicia, as well as Judea and Damascus, with that doctrine which his divine Master had condescended to teach him, and to be *the means of regeneration* to the inhabitants of the place from whence he derived *his natural birth*.

SECT. XX. Ver. 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30

And while we behold with reverence and delight *the hand of God* with and upon him, let us, as we are told *the churches in Judea* did, while he was *by face unknown* to them, *glorify God in him*, (Gal. i. 22, 24.) In all the labours and writings of Paul, the glorious apostle, let us keep Saul *the persecutor* in our eye, still remembering, that (according to his own account of the matter) it was *for this cause* that he, though once *the chief of sinners, obtained mercy, that in him, as the chief, Christ might shew forth a pattern of all long-suffering to them that should hereafter believe.* (1 Tim. i. 15, 16.)—Well might *the churches be edified* by such an additional evidence of the truth and power of the gospel. May *the edification* be continued to *churches* in succeeding ages; and while a gracious Providence is *giving them rest*, may they *walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*, and be daily *multiplied*, established, and improved. 31

SECT. XXI.

Peter cures Æneas at Lydda, and then raises Dorcas from the dead at Joppa. Acts IX. 32, *to the end.*

Acts IX. 32.

AND it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he

Acts IX. 32.

HAVING dispatched this important history of the conversion of Saul, and of the vigour and success with which he set out in the Christian ministry; let us now turn to another scene, which happened during that peaceful interval mentioned above. *Now it came to pass*, at this favourable juncture, *that* the apostle *Peter*, as he was *making a progress through all* the [*parts*] of the neighbouring country, that he might rectify

SECT. XXI. Acts IX. 32.

SECT. XXI.

Acts IX. 32.

rectify any disorders that occurred, and instruct and confirm the new converts in the knowledge and faith of the gospel, among the other places that he visited *came also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda*, a considerable town not far from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. *And he found there a certain man whose name was Æneas, who had* been long disabled by *a palsy, and had kept his bed eight years*, in so deplorable a state, as to be quite incapable of rising from it, or to be any way helpful to himself. *And Peter* seeing him, and perceiving in himself a strong intimation that the divine power would be exerted for his recovery, *said to him, Æneas, Jesus the* true *Messiah*, in whose name I preach and act, now at this instant *healeth thee*[a], and operates while I speak, to strengthen and restore thy weakened frame: With a dependance therefore upon his almighty agency, *arise, and make thy bed*[b]. *And* upon this the palsy left him, and the disabled man was all at once so strengthened, that *he arose immediately*, and did it.

And the miracle appeared so extraordinary to *all the inhabitants of* the learned and celebrated town of *Lydda*[c], *and* to those of the fruitful vale

he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: Arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

35 And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Saron, saw

a *Jesus the Messiah* (Ιησους ο Χριστος) *healeth thee.*] It is worth our while to observe *the great difference* there is between the manner in which this miracle is wrought by Peter, and that in which Christ performed his works of divine power and goodness. The different characters of the *servant* and the *Son*, the *creature* and the *God*, are every where apparent.—Clarius justly observes here, that *no faith* on the part of the person to be healed *was required*; and the like is observable in many other cases, where persons, perhaps *ignorant of Christ*, were surprised with an unexpected cure. But, where persons petitioned themselves for a cure, a declaration of *their faith* was often required, that none might be encouraged to try experiments out of curiosity in a manner, which would have been very indecent, and have tended to many bad consequences.

b *Make thy bed.*] Beza thinks, it is in effect bidding him *take up his bed*; but De Dieu well observes, that στρωσον rather signifies to *smooth it.* As he was now for the present to quit his bed, Dr. Hammond seems to think it refers to *a couch* on which he was to lie *at the table*: But perhaps it might mean, as if it were said to him, "Whereas you have hitherto for a long time been unable to help yourself at all, now you shall be so entirely restored, as not only to be able to *rise*, but to *shake up* and *smooth your own bed* against the next time you have occasion to lie down upon it;" which he might immediately do, as a proof of the degree in which he was strengthened.

c The learned and celebrated town of *Lydda.*] I call it so, because there were several celebrated *Jewish schools* there, and the great *Sanhedrim* sometimes met near it. (See *Lightfoot, Cent. Chor. Mat. cap.* 16.) It was but one day's journey distant from Jerusalem, and is said by Josephus to have been so large a town, as not to have been inferior to a city. (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 6, [al. 5,] § 2.) Some have supposed, it was the same with *Lod*, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin: (1 Chron. viii. 12, and Neh. xi. 35.) However, as it stood *near* Joppa, it must have been situate near the borders of the tribe of Ephraim.—Saron or Sharon, which is here connected with it, was not a town, but a large fertile *plain* or *valley*, that lay near to Lydda, and extended from Cæsarea to Joppa, in which were many villages, as it was noted for its delightful situation and the fine pasture it afforded for their flocks. Compare 1 Chron. xxvii. 29. Isa. xxxiii. 9. xxxv. 2. lxv. 10.

d *Joppa,*

saw him, and turned to the Lord.

vale of *Saron*, part of which lay in the neighbourhood of it, that they no sooner *saw him*, and had an opportunity of being informed in the particulars of so unparalleled a fact, but they believed that he in whose name it was done, was undoubtedly the Messiah, *and* so *turned to the Lord*, and embraced his gospel.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did.

And the number of converts in these parts was greatly increased by another, and yet more astonishing event, which happened about the same time. For *there was* then *at Joppa*, a noted sea-port in that neighbourhood [d], *a certain female disciple, named Tabitha, who by* the *interpretation* of her name into the Greek language *is called Dorcas* [e]; [*and*] *she was* universally respected as a person of a very lovely character, for she was *full of good works and alms deeds which she did* upon all proper occasions. 36

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

And it came to pass in those days, while Peter was at Lydda, *that she was sick, and died. And when they had washed her* corpse, according to the custom of the place, *they laid her in an upper chamber.* 37

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he

And as Lydda was very *near Joppa*, being but about six miles off, *the disciples* at Joppa *hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, intreating* [*him*] *that he would not* by any means *delay to come to them* [f]; that he might give them his 38

d *Joppa*, a noted sea-port.] This was the nearest maritime town to Jerusalem, and was the only *port* belonging to it on the *Mediterranean Sea*, but was more than a day's journey distant from it, though some have said Jerusalem might be seen from thence. (*Strab. Geogr. lib.* xvi. p. 522.) We find it mentioned in the *Old Testament* by the name of Japho, as belonging to the tribe of Dan. (Josh. xix. 46.) It was the place, to which the materials for building Solomon's *temple* were brought in floats by sea, and carried from thence by land to Jerusalem. (2 Chron. ii. 16.) Jonah took ship from hence for Tarshish, (Jonah i. 3.) And, as it lay between Azotus and Cæsarea, it was probably one of the cities where Philip *preached the gospel* in his progress; (Acts viii. 40.) There are still some remains of it, under the name of *Jaffa*.

e *Tabitha, who by interpretation is called Dorcas.*] She might, as Dr. Lightfoot supposes, be one of the Hellenist Jews, and be known among the Hebrews by the Syriac name *Tabitha*, while the Greeks called her in their own language *Dorcas*. They are both words of the same import, and signify *a roe* or *fawn*; in which sense the word Δορκας is often used by the *Septuagint*, Deut. xii. 15, 22. 2 Sam. ii. 18. Cant. ii. 9. iv. 5, &c. And thus the name might probably be given her in her infancy on account of her amiable form, which rendered her peculiarly pleasant in the eyes of her parents.—Others suppose it rather to have signified *a wild goat*; and so the name might be intended to allude to the sprightliness of her temper, or to the quickness of her sight.—For the etymology of the words, see Drusius and Grotius *in loc.*

f *That he would not delay to come to them.*] We can hardly imagine, they urged *his coming*, merely to *comfort them* under this breach: But, if they had any view to what followed, it was an astonishing instance of *faith*, as it does not appear *the apostles* had before this *raised any one from the dead.* Were we to have been judges, perhaps we should have thought it much better, that Stephen should have been raised than Dorcas; but we must submit our reasonings, on what we think fittest and best, to the

SECT. XXI.

his advice and assistance under that great distress, which the loss of so dear and useful a friend could not but occasion.

he would not delay to come to them.

Acts IX. 39. *And Peter* presently *arose, and went* to Joppa *with them. And when he was come* to Tabitha's house, *they brought him into the upper chamber* where she was laid out; *and all the widows stood by him, weeping* for the loss of such a benefactress, *and shewing the coats and mantles which Dorcas made* for charitable purposes, *while she* 40 *was* yet continued *with them. And Peter putting them all out,* as he found in himself a powerful encouragement to hope, that the petition he was about to offer was dictated from above, and therefore should certainly be heard, *kneeled down and prayed* with great earnestness; *and* then *turning to the body, he said,* as with a voice of authority in the name and presence of his great Lord, the sovereign of life and death, *Tabitha, arise. And* he had no sooner spoke these words, but *she opened her eyes, and seeing* 41 *Peter, she* immediately *sat up. And giving her his hand, he raised her up* on her feet; *and having called the saints and widows,* who were near the chamber, and had impatiently been waiting for the event, *he presented her* to them *alive.*

39 Then Peter arose, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed, and turning *him* to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave he his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

42 *And* [*this*] wonderful fact *was* presently *known throughout all* the city of *Joppa; and many* more *believed in the Lord* upon the credit of so signal 43 a miracle. *And* as Peter was willing to improve so favourable an opportunity of addressing to them while their minds were impressed with so astonishing a miracle, *he continued many days at Joppa, in the house of one Simon a tanner*[g]; from whence he was afterwards sent for to Cæsarea, upon an extraordinary occasion, which will be related at large in the next section.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa, with one Simon a tanner.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 32, 38 BLESSED *apostle!* who was thus enabled to imitate *his divine master,* in what he himself has celebrated as the brightest glory of his human character, in *going about doing good,* (Acts x. 38.) and who had always a concern, like him, when he performed the

the infinitely wiser determination of *Providence,* or we shall be most foolish and miserable creatures.

[g] *In the house of one Simon a tanner.*] Some render it *a currier.* His business perhaps is mentioned, that it might appear *the apostle* was not elevated, by the dignity of the late miracle, above mean persons and things.

the most important offices of kindness to *men's bodies*, that all might be subservient to the edification and salvation of *their souls!* SECT. XXI.

Behold, in what has now been read, not only *a disease* which a continuance for *eight years* had rendered inveterate and hopeless, but *death* itself yielding to his command, or rather to the infinitely superior power of his Lord, the great *conqueror of death* for himself, and (adored be his compassionate name) for all his people too. It is most delightful to observe, with what solicitous care of pious humility Peter immediately transferred the eye and heart of Æneas, and of every spectator, from himself to Christ, while he says, *Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee.* He would not leave them any room for a surmise, as if it was by any power of his own that so astonishing a cure was wrought; but leads them to consider it as the act of Christ, and to ascribe the glory of the work to him whose minister he was, and in whose name he spake. Thus, if God favour us as the instruments of *healing* and animating *those souls* that were once lying in a hopeless state, not only *disabled*, but *dead in trespasses and sins*, let us acknowledge that it is *not we, but the grace of God that is with us.* (1 Cor. xv. 10.) Ver. 33 34

Great, no doubt, was the affliction which *the disciples* sustained, when so amiable and useful a person as Dorcas was taken away from them by death; a person whose heart had been so ready to pity the afflicted, and her hand to help them; a person whose prudence and diligence had also been as conspicuous as *her charity;* for she well knew there were circumstances in which to have given *the poor* the value of these things in money, would have been a much less certain and suitable benefit, than to furnish them with the necessaries and conveniencies of life thus *manufactured* for their immediate use: And surely *the garments which she made* and distributed, must be more precious to them in some degree for having passed through so kind a hand. Let us be emulous of such a character, in all the expressions of it which suit our circumstances in life, that when we are *dead* the memory of our good actions may survive, to the credit of our profession, and to the glory of God. 37, 38 36--39

It was a circumstance which greatly enhanced the value of the intended *miracle*, that it was to *call back from the dead* so excellent a person: And with what *humility*, with what *faith* was it performed! Again does *the servant follow* not only the path but the very steps of *his Lord*, in *dismissing all witnesses*, that nothing might look like *vain-glory*, that nothing might interrupt the fervour of *that address* he was to pour out before God. First *he bends his knees* in prayer to *the Lord of life*, and then he *directs his voice* with 40

SECT. XXI.

a divine efficacy *to the dead.* So may we, *O Lord,* learn to address ourselves to those under the power of *spiritual death,* with that spirit and vigour which we receive by solemn and affectionate intercourse with thee, who hast *the life of nature* and *of grace* at thy command.

Ver. 41 Who can imagine the surprise of Dorcas, when thus *called back to life again,* or of her pious *friends,* when they *saw her alive?* For their own sakes, and the sake of the indigent and distressed, there was *cause of rejoicing,* and much more in the view of such a confirmation given to the *gospel,* and such a token of Christ's *presence* with his servants: Yet to herself it was *matter of resignation* and of *submission,* rather than of *exultation,* that she was called back to these scenes of vanity, which surely would hardly have been tolerable, had not a veil of oblivion been drawn over those glories which her separate spirit enjoyed. But we please ourselves with a charitable and reasonable hope, that the remainder of her days were yet more zealously and vigorously spent in the service of her Saviour and her God, *yielding herself to him, as* in a double sense *alive from the dead.* Thus would *a richer treasure* be laid up for her *in heaven;* and she would afterwards return to *a far more exceeding weight of glory,* than that from which so astonishing a Providence had, for a short interval, recalled her.

SECT. XXII.

Cornelius, an uncircumcised though pious Gentile, being divinely instructed to do it, sends for Peter, who, taught by a vision not to scruple it, returns with his messengers to Cæsarea. Acts X. 1—23.

Acts X. 1.

SECT. XXII.

Acts X. 1.

HITHERTO the gospel had been preached to the Jews alone; but God was *now* determined to open a way for the discovery of it to the Gentiles; and, that a proper decorum might be observed in the manner of doing it, he first sent it to one, who, though uncircumcised, was nevertheless a worshipper of the true God, whose story we shall here proceed to relate. Let it therefore be observed, that while Peter continued at Joppa, (where the conclusion of the former section left him) *there was a certain man, in* the neighbouring and celebrated city of *Cæsarea, named Cornelius,* who was *a centurion,* or commander of an hundred men, *of that* which is *called the Italian* cohort or *band* of soldiers,

Acts X. 1.

THERE was a certain man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band, called the Italian *band,*

Acts X. 2.

diers[a], which attended the Roman governor, who commonly kept his residence at this city.

2 *A* devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway.

2 This Cornelius was *a man of* distinguished *piety, and one that feared* and worshipped the only living and true *God*[b], *with all his house, giving also much alms to the people* of the Jews, though he was himself a Gentile; *and praying to God continually*, in secret, domestic, and public devotions, as he esteemed it an important part of his daily business and pleasure, to employ himself in such sacred exercises.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius,

3 Now at a time when he was thus engaged, *he evidently saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day*, (that is, about three in the afternoon, which being the hour of evening sacrifice, was chosen by him as a proper season for his devotion,) *an angel of God coming in to him*, in a form and habit of surprising brightness, *and saying to him, Cornelius! And having fixed his eyes upon him* with astonishment, *he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord!* Protect me from all danger! and let me know the meaning of this vision[c]! *And* presently the angel exe-

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers

4

a *The Italian* cohort or *band* of soldiers.] A Roman *cohort* was a company of soldiers commanded by a *tribune*, consisting gerally of about a thousand. (See *Pitisc. Lexic. in voc Cohors.)* Many, with Grotius, have explained this, as if the meaning were, that Cornelius was a centurion of one of the cohorts belonging to *the Italian legion*; and the editors of the Prussian *Testament*, with our English follower, have ventured (quite contrary to the *original,)* to translate it so. But I refer the reader to the many learned and judicious things which Mr. Biscoe has said, (at *Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 1, p. 330—335,) to shew, that the Italian *legion* did not exist at this time, and that the version here given is to be retained. I think it exceedingly probable, for the reasons he urges, that this was *a cohort* different from any of the *legionary* ones, and consequently, that Luke has here expressed himself with his usually accuracy; and that the mistake lies, as it generally does, in those who think they have learning enough to correct him. It is probable, this was called *the Italian cohort*, because most of the soldiers belonging to it were Italians; whereas Josephus mentions *Cæsarean cohorts*, from whom it might be proper to distinguish this. *Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 9, [al. 7,] § 2, *& lib.* xx. *cap.* 8, [al. 6,] § 7.) It might perhaps be the lifeguard of the Roman governor, who generally resided in this splendid and celebrated city.

b *A man of* distinguished *piety, and one that feared God.*] It is a very unwarrantable liberty, that is taken in the *version* of 1727, to translate the latter of these clauses, *a proselyte*. I hope in a proper place to shew, that the name of *proselyte* was never applied by so ancient and correct a writer as Luke, to an *uncircumcised person*, and that there is no sufficient authority for the *distinction*, so generally admitted by learned men, between *proselytes of righteousness*, who by *circumcision* became debtors to the whole law, and *proselytes of the gate*, who, worshipping the true God, renouncing idolatry, and submitting themselves to the observation of the *seven* (supposed) *precepts of Noah*, were allowed, though *uncircumcised*, to live among the Jews, and converse familiarly with them. But the question is too complex, and too important to be handled in these *notes*. I therefore only desire, that I may not be condemned for waving all those interpretations of Scripture, which depend on *this distinction of proselytes*, till my reasons for doing it have been examined and answered.

c *What is it, Lord!*] Dr. Whitby thinks these words are addressed to *the angel*, as if Cornelius had said, "Sir, what would you say to me?" But it is both more literal and natural to render it as in the *paraphrase*

SECT. XXII.

executed the commission with which *he* was charged, and *said to him, Thy* repeated fervent *prayers, and thine alms* with which they have been attended, *are come up* into the divine presence *as a* grateful *memorial before God*, far more pleasing to him than the most fragrant incense:

Acts X. 4.

prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 *And* he is *now* about to give thee a very singular demonstration of his favour, by discovering things to thee which it is of the highest importance that thou shouldst know: *Send* therefore some of thy *men to Joppa, and fetch hither* [*one*]

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose sirname is Peter:

6 *Simon, whose sirname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon*, by trade *a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side;* and when he is come, as he will be instructed from above in the message he is to bring, *he shall tell thee what thou must do* for the security of thy final happiness.

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 *As soon then as the angel who spake to Cornelius was gone*, he was so earnestly desirous to hear what Peter was to say to him, that he immediately obeyed the orders that were given him; and *calling two of his domestics, and a pious soldier* who was one *of them that* always attended

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his houshold servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually:

8 his person and *waited upon him, And having related to them all* [*these*] *things* just in the manner they had happened, *he* ordered them to go for Peter, and *sent them* away *to Joppa* that very evening.

8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 And as they set out too late to reach the place that night, *on the next day, while they were on their journey, and drew near the city, Peter went up to the top of the house to pray*[d]; the flat open roof with which the houses in those parts were built, affording a more convenient place of retirement than could at that time be found within doors; and it was now *about* noon, or *the*

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour,

10 *sixth hour* of the day[e]. *And he was very hungry*

10 And he became very

phrase, and to understand it as a sudden *exclamation* and *prayer to God* to preserve him, and let him know what was the design of so astonishing an appearance.

d *Went up to the top of the house to pray.*] It seems a strange fancy of Mr. Reeves, (*Apol.* Vol. II. p. 68,) that this place to which Peter retired was some *upper room*, where the disciples used to assemble, and that he went up to it as *a consecrated place*, in which his devotions would be more acceptable to God than elsewhere. ——It is not improbable, that he might the rather choose it, for the advantage it gave him to look towards the *temple* at Jerusalem, to which Peter might hitherto have the same regard as the other Jews had, who used to turn their faces towards it when they prayed. (Compare 1 Kings viii. 29, 30, 44; Psalm cxxxviii. 2; Dan. vi. 10; Jon ii. 4.)

e *About the sixth hour.*] Besides the two stated *hours of prayer*, at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, (of which we have taken notice before in *note* b on Acts iii. 1, Vol. VII. p. 527,) the more *devout* among the Jews were used to set apart *a third*, and to retire for prayer *at noon*. Thus David says, *Evening and morning and at noon, will I pray;* (Psal. lv. 17;) and Daniel also *kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed;* (Dan. vi. 10.) Whether Peter

very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have

hungry, and would gladly *have taken a little refreshment*[f]; *but while they were preparing* dinner for the family, *he fell into an extasy* or trance[g], in which a very remarkable and instructive vision presented itself to him. For he had a strong impression made upon his mind, *and* apprehended, while he lay in this state, that *he saw heaven opened, and something* of a large extent *descending to him* from above *like a great sheet* or wrapper[h], which was *fastened at the four corners, and* so *let down to the earth* by an invisible hand: *In which there were all* [*sorts of*] *things* in great variety, even *four-footed animals of the earth, and wild beasts, and reptiles* or creeping things, *and fowls of the air* of several kinds. *And* while this plenty of provision was before him, *there came a voice* from heaven *to him*, saying, *Rise, Peter*, since thou art hungry, and take thy choice of what thou wilt out of this great variety; *kill* any of these animals which may be most agreeable to thee, *and eat* freely of what is before thee[i]. *But Peter said*, with a kind of pious horror, *By no means, Lord:* I would much rather continue fasting a great while longer, than satisfy my hunger on such terms: *for* I see only unclean animals here, and thou knowest that from a religious regard to the precepts of thy law, *I have never*, from the

SECT. XXII.

Acts X. 10.

11 12 13 14

Peter was induced by this, or by some other reason, to retire for *prayer* at this time, it seems at least to have been customary in the first ages of the *Christian church* to offer up their *daily prayers* at the *third*, the *sixth*, and the *ninth hour*. See *Clem. Alex. Strom. lib.* vii. p. 722.

[f] *Have taken a little refreshment.*] After all that Limborch and several other writers have said, this seems to me the most proper import of the word γευσασθαι; and the authorities produced by Raphelius, (*Annot ex Herod.* p. 343, 344; and Elsner Vol. I. p. 407.) to prove that it signifies just the same with *making a set meal*, confirm me in the contrary opinion.

[g] *An extasy* or trance.] The word εκστασις properly signifies *such a rapture of mind*, as gives the person who falls into it *a look of astonishment*, and renders him insensible of the external objects round him, while in the mean time his imagination is agitated in an extraordinary manner with some *striking scenes* which pass before it, and take up all the attention. The reader may see some extraordinary instances of this kind mentioned by Gualtperius, in his large *note* on this text.

[h] *Something—like a great sheet* or wrapper.] As we do not in English call *sheets* VESSELS, I thought the general word here used more properly answered to σκευος, which extends to all sorts of household-furniture, as well as instruments of husbandry, war, &c. and has no word that I recollect in our language, exactly answering to it. The other word οθονη signifies any large *piece of linen* in which things are wrapped, and seems to have been *an emblem of the gospel*, as extending to all nations of men.

[i] *Kill, and eat.*] This appears a general intimation, that the Jewish Christians were, by the gospel, absolved from the *ceremonial law*, in which the distinction between *clean* and *unclean meats* made so considerable a part.——Mr. L'Enfant and some other critics, have observed, that the Jews looked on *unclean animals* as an image of the Gentiles; which, if it were the case, renders this emblematical representation peculiarly proper. See *Grotius* on ver. 15.

[k] *Therefore*

SECT. XXII.

Acts X. 14.

the day of my birth to this hour, *eaten any thing which is common or unclean*, nor took the liberty of tasting what is prohibited in itself, or polluted by any accidental circumstance that has attend-
15 ed it. *And the voice [said] to him again the second time, Those things which God hath cleansed* by such a declaration of his will in bidding thee to eat of them, *do not thou* any more *call common*, but readily submit thyself to his directions, and leave it in the power of the great law-giver
16 to change his precepts as he shall see fit. *And* that it might impress his mind the more, and he might give the more particular attention to it as to a thing established by God, the vision was not only doubled, but *this was done three times* successively, (compare Gen. xli. 32,) *and* at last *the vessel*, with all that was in it, *was taken up into heaven again.*

17 *And* Providence so ordered it, that at this very juncture, *while Peter was doubting in himself what the vision which he had seen might import*, or what it was designed to point out to him, *behold, the men who were sent from Cornelius*, the pious centurion mentioned above, *having inquired out the house of Simon* the tanner, *stood at*
18 *the door: And calling* to those that were within, *they asked if* one *Simon, whose sirname was Peter, lodged there:* And being told that he did, they desired immediately to speak with him on an affair which was of the utmost impor-
19 tance. *Now, as Peter was reflecting on the vision*, and was attentively revolving it in his own mind, *the Spirit*, by an inward suggestion, *said unto him, Behold, three men are inquiring*
20 *for thee:* Delay not *therefore*, but *arise and go down* to these men[k], *and take the journey with them* which they shall propose, *without any scruple* of conversing with them, or the person from whom they come; *for I have sent them*; and, when thou comest to compare their message with what thou hast now seen, thou wilt easily know the intent of this vision, and the use thou art to make of it for thine own direction.

21 *Then Peter* instantly, before any message from the strangers could reach him, *went down* from

have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself, what this vision which he had seen should mean; behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius, had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him

[k] *Therefore arise and go down.*] The learned Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 408,) and Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Herod.* p. 345, 346,) have observed, that αλλα should here be rendered *therefore*, and have produced several instances from approved authors, in which it has that signification.

him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

from the house-top *to the men who were sent to him from Cornelius, and* while they still continued at the door, *said* to them, *Behold, I am [the man] whom ye inquire for: What is the cause for which you are come hither?*

SECT. XXII.

Acts X. 21.

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

And they told their story in a few plain words, and *said, Cornelius the centurion, a righteous man, who feareth God, and hath a character attested by all the Jewish people,* though he be not completely a proselyte to their religion, *has been divinely instructed by* the ministry of *an holy angel, to send for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee* upon some important subject, in the purport of which we do not doubt but thou art fully instructed, though it be not particularly known to us: We therefore desire, that, in compliance with his request, and this divine command, thou wouldst be pleased immediately to go with us to Cæsarea. 22

23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them.* And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Having therefore called them in, he entertained [them] there that night: *And the next day Peter set out with them; and some of the brethren who were* inhabitants *of Joppa went with him* upon so great an occasion, which could not but excite their diligent attention, and raise an high expectation. 23

IMPROVEMENT.

WE are now entering on a series of the story in which we ourselves are intimately concerned: We are going to see *the first fruits of the Gentiles* gathered into the church; and let us see it with gratitude and delight. Most amiable and exemplary is the character of Cornelius, who, though exposed to all the temptations of a *military life,* maintained not only his virtue but *his piety too.* He *feared God,* and he *wrought righteousness;* and daily presented before God *prayers* and *alms,* which added a beauty and acceptance to each other: And he was also an example of *domestic,* as well as of *personal religion;* as if he had been trained up under the discipline of that heroic *general* and *prince,* who so publicly and so resolutely declared before an assembled nation, even on the supposition of their general apostacy, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,* (Josh. xxiv. 15.) Ver. 1 2

To him God was pleased to *send the gospel,* and the *manner* in which he sent it is well worthy of our remark. *An angel* appeared, not himself to preach it, but to introduce *the apostle,* to whom that work was assigned.—With what holy complacency of soul 3, 5, 6

did

SECT. XXII.

did Cornelius hear, by a messenger from heaven, that *his prayers and alms were come up* for an acceptable *memorial before God!*

Ver. 4 They whose *prayers* and *alms* are proportionably affectionate and sincere, may consider it as *a testimony* borne to the gracious manner in which an impartial and immutable God regards and accepts them.—Yet after all that they have done, let them learn by 7, 8 the conduct of this devout, upright and charitable man, not so to rest in their own virtues as to neglect *inquiring after that way of salvation* which God has established by his Son, but always ready to regard it as *the one thing needful;* let them maintain *an uniformity in their character*, by a diligent and candid attention to the declaration of it in the gospel.

9 *Peter* retires for *secret prayer* in the *middle of the day*, as if he had learned of *David* to say, *Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud.* (Psal. v. 17.) He seeks a convenient 10—16 *retirement*, and in that retirement *the vision of the Lord* meets him; 17—20 a vision *mysterious* indeed in its first appearances, but gradually *opened* by divine providence, the process of which renders many things plain, which at first seemed dark and unaccountable.

13, 15 This vision declared to him in effect the abolition of the *Mosaic ceremonial law*, of which the precepts relating to *the distinction of* 14 *meats* made so important a part; and we see here with pleasure, 21, 23 that strict as *his observation of it* had been *from his very birth*, he was not now *disobedient to the heavenly vision*, but freely *received the uncircumcised*, and freely goes to be a guest to one who was so. Thus let us always preserve an openness and impartiality of mind, and in proportion to the degree in which we appear willing *to know the truth*, we shall find that *the truth will make us free.* (John viii. 32.)

Nevertheless, as it was an affair about which some difficulties might arise, and some censures may even in the way of duty be 23 incurred, he takes *some of the brethren with him*, that their advice and concurrence in what he did might be a farther *justification of his conduct*, to those who were not perhaps sufficiently aware of *the divine direction* under which he was. How agreeable a mixture of *prudence* and *humility!* Let it teach us on all proper occasions to express at once a becoming *deference to our brethren*, and a prudent *caution* in our own best intended actions, that even *our good may not be evil spoken of*, when it lies in our power to prevent it. (Rom. xiv. 16.)

SECT.

SECT. XXIII.

Peter coming to Cæsarea, preaches the gospel to Cornelius and his friends; and upon their believing it and receiving the Holy Spirit by a miraculous effusion, he without farther scruple admits them into the church by baptism, though they were uncircumcised Gentiles. Acts X. 24. *to the end.*

Acts X. 24.

AND the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea: and Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

Acts X. 24.

IT was observed in the preceding section, that Peter and some of the brethren set out from Joppa upon the invitation of Cornelius: *And* we now add, that *the next day they entered into Cæsarea; and* good *Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his relations and* most *intimate friends* upon this great and important occasion. SECT. XXIII. Acts X. 24.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

And as Peter was entering into his house, 25 *Cornelius met him, and* to express his reverence to one so remarkably the messenger of heaven, *falling down at his feet, paid homage to him*[a]. *But Peter* would by no means permit this, and 26

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

therefore *raised him up, saying, Arise,* for *I also myself am* nothing more than *a man* as thou art, and pretend to no right to such profound respects as these, but am ready in civil life to pay thee all the regard that is due to thee.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

This happened just at the entrance of the 27 house, *and* thus *discoursing with him, he went in and found many* of the friends and acquaintance of Cornelius *gathered together*; so that Peter,

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation? but God hath shewed me, that I should not call any man common or unclean.

at the first sight of them, expressed some sur- 28 prize. *And he said to them, You* cannot but *know, that it is* looked upon among us as *unlawful for a man that is a Jew to join* in friendly conversation *with* a Gentile, *or to come into the house of one of another nation,* who is not at least naturalized by circumcision and a full conformity to our law, which I am well aware that you are not: *Nevertheless God hath* lately *shewn me, that I am* to make no such distinction, and *to call no man common or unclean. Wherefore* 29 *when*

29 Therefore came I

[a] *And falling down at his feet, paid homage to him.*] He could not, as some have fancied, imagine Peter to be *an angel*, considering how *the angel* had spoken of him. But his reverence for him as *a divine messenger*, together with the custom which prevailed *in the East* of expressing the highest respect by prostration, might induce him to *fall down at his feet*, and offer an homage, which Peter wisely and religiously declined.

[b] *On*

SECT. xxiii.

Acts X. 29.

when I was sent for hither by your messengers, *I came* away *without* any contradiction or *debate*; I would *ask therefore*, and desire to know from your own mouth, *on what account you have sent for me* [b].

I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 *And Cornelius*, with all frankness and seriousness *said*, It is now *four days ago* that *I was fasting till this hour, and* at the usual time of evening prayer, *at the ninth hour I prayed in my house; and behold*, to my unspeakable surprise, *a man* appeared and *stood before me in bright raiment*, whom I perceived to be an angel: *And* 31 as this put me in some fear, he *said* in a most gentle and engaging manner, *Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are* graciously *remembered before God*, who is about to give thee a most important token of his favourable 32 regard to thee: *Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth in the house of* [*one*] *Simon a tanner by the sea-side; who, when he is come, shall speak to thee* of various things now unknown to thee, but on thine acquaintance with which, new scenes of duty and happiness shall be opened 33 upon thee. *Immediately, therefore*, that very evening, *I sent unto thee* the messengers whom I now see returned with thee; *and thou hast done* very *well*, and acted like a pious and charitable person *in coming. Now therefore, we are all here present before God*, disposed *to hear* with a becoming reverence and attention, *all* those *things which God hath given thee in charge.*

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing.

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner, by the sea-side: who when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 *Then Peter opening his mouth*, and addressing himself to them with a seriousness and solemnity answerable to so great an occasion, *said, Of a truth, I perceive*, and am now fully satisfied, whatever my former prejudices were as to the difference between the Jews and Gentiles, *that God*, the great Father of the whole human race, *is no respecter of persons*; and accepts no man merely because he is of such a nation, nor so determines his regards as to confine his favours

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

[b] *On what account have you sent for me.*] Peter knew it by revelation, and by the messengers who were sent from Cornelius: but he puts him on telling the story, that the company might be informed, and Cornelius himself awakened and impressed by the narration; the repetition of which, even as we here read it, gives a dignity and spirit to Peter's succeeding discourse, beyond what we could otherwise so sensibly perceive.

vours to the seed of Abraham and the people of the Jews alone: *But* that *in every nation, he that* with a true filial reverence and obedience *feareth him, and* in consequence of this *worketh righteousness*[c], whatever be the family from which he is descended, though he be none of the posterity of Abraham, *is acceptable to him.*

35 But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

And this I apprehend now to be the meaning of *that message which he sent to the children of Israel*[d], *proclaiming the glad tidings of* mutual *peace by Jesus Christ*, the great ambassador of peace; *who*, after all his abasement, being exalted to his kingdom, *is* become *Lord of all*, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, and under that character will manifest the riches of his mercy unto all that call upon him. (Compare Rom. iii. 29. x. 12.) And since this is the case, far be it from me to maintain any farther reserve with regard to those whom God hath been pleased through him to receive. I shall therefore set myself with pleasure to communicate to you the method of salvation by him. 36

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

You cannot but in general *know* something, though it may be only in a confused and imperfect way, of *the report there was* but a few years ago *through all Judea, which began* first and 37

37 That word (*I say*) you know, which was published throughout

[c] *He that feareth him, and worketh righteousness.*] This, for any thing I can see, might be supposed the case of many, who were far from being in any degree *Jewish proselytes*, and had never heard of the Jews and their religion, as it was certainly the case of many, before the peculiarities of *Judaism* existed, and even before the institution of the *Abrahamic covenant*. I think this text proves, that God would sooner *send an angel* to direct *pious and upright persons* to the knowledge of the gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it: But far from intimating, that some such persons may be found among those that *reject Christianity*, when offered to them in its full evidence, it determines nothing concerning the existence of such in every nation, though it tells us, how God would regard them, supposing them to exist.

[d] *That message which he sent*, &c.] I was long of opinion with Erasmus, that the whole of *this verse* was to be referred to the first words of the next, as if Peter had said, *You know the word which he sent*, &c.—— even *the word which was published*, &c. But upon farther consideration I have changed my view of it, and preferred that interpretation which Irenæus and Chrysostom anciently proposed, and in which Beza, Grotius, De Dieu, L'Enfant, and most of the moderns have followed them. And I have acquiesced in it, not only in regard to the great judgment of some of these writers, and their exquisite skill in the *Greek idiom*, but also because I see not how Peter could reasonably take it for granted, that Cornelius and his friends were acquainted with the message of peace and pardon *sent to Israel by Jesus Christ*, that is, with the gospel, which if they had known, there would have been no necessity of his own embassy to them. It must be allowed indeed, that Christ did not expressly preach this doctrine, and declare the admission of the *uncircumcised Gentiles* into his church: but he had dropped *several hints* concerning the extent of his kingdom, which Peter, on such a striking occasion as this, might recollect as referring to this great event. (Compare Matt. viii. 11, 12; John x. 16; xii. 32; Mark xvi. 15, 16; and Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) In this view there was a peculiar propriety in mentioning Jesus as *Lord of all*: But nothing can be more unnatural than Heinsius's gloss and version.—*The* Logos *who preached peace, &c. is the Lord of all.* The Logos is never said to do any thing *by Jesus Christ.* [e] *Concerning*

SECT. XXIII.

Acts X. 38.

and took its rise *from Galilee*, just in your neighbourhood, *after the baptism which John preached* who went before that extraordinay person to prepare his way: I mean the report [*concerning*] *Jesus of Nazareth*[e], *how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit, and with a power* of performing the most extraordinary miracles in attestation of his divine mission; *who went about*, and passed through the whole country, *doing good* wherever he came; *and* particularly *healing all* those *who were oppressed by* the tyranny of *the devil*, dispossessing those malignant spirits of darkness with a most apparent and irresistible superiority to them, *for God* himself *was with him*, and wrought by him to
39 produce those astonishing effects. *And we* his apostles, of whom I have the honour to be one, *are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the* whole *region of the Jews, and* particularly in *Jerusalem*, their capital city; for we attended him in all the progress which he made, beholding his miracles, and hearing his discourses: *Whom* nevertheless this ungrateful people were so far from receiving with a becoming regard, that *they slew* him in a most infamous manner, even *hanging him upon a tree*, and crucifying him, as if he had been the vilest of
40 malefactors and slaves. Yet *this very person*, though so injuriously treated by men, *hath* the ever-blessed *God raised up* from the dead *on the third day*, according to repeated predictions; *and*, as a demonstration of the truth of it, *hath given him to become manifest* after his resurrec-
41 tion, and evidently to appear. *Not* indeed *to all the* Jewish *people*[f], nor to return to those public

out all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached.

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly,

41 Not to all the people,

[e] *Concerning Jesus of Nazareth.*] He was not ashamed to own, that the person he preached as the Messiah came out of a place so infamous among the Jews as *Nazareth*, since all the reproaches of that kind were so abundantly rolled away by the glorious circumstances which he afterwards relates.—The difficulty here in the construction of the *original* seems to be the best removed by *supplying* the word *who concerning*, and so referring it (as Sir Norton Knatchbull and others have done) to the report which they had heard. The sense however will be the same, if *αὐτὸν* be considered as *redundant*, (in the same manner as we find the like expression used, Matt. xii. 36.) and the clause rendered as it is in our translation, *How God anointed Jesus*, &c.—It is more natural to admit either of these explications, than to repeat the words [*You know*] from the preceding verse, (as some would do) and to suppose that Peter said to persons who were strangers to the gospel, *You know Jesus of Nazareth.*

[f] *Not to all the people.*] This is not a place for vindicating the wisdom and righteousness of that dispensation of Providence, which ordered that Christ should *not appear publicly* after his resurrection. Many valuable writers have done it at large. See *Mr. Ditton on the Resur.* Part III. § 60—70. *Bishop Burnet's four Disc.* p. 52—56. *Dr. Sykes on Christianity*, chap. x. p. 164, *& seq. Mr. Fleming's Christol.* Vol. III. p. 494—498. *Bishop Blackwall* at

people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

public assemblies of them which he had often visited, *but to* certain *witnesses*, who were *before appointed by God* for this purpose; *even to us*, *who* conversed very intimately with him before his death, and were so far favoured that we *have eaten and drank* together *with him* several times *after he rose from the dead*; so that we can, and do with the greatest certainty bear witness to the truth of this important fact. *And he hath* *given in charge to us to proclaim* the glad tidings of salvation by him *to the people, and to testify* wherever we come *that it is he*, this very Jesus of Nazareth, *who is* the person *appointed by God* [*to be*] *the* glorious and majestic *judge* in the great day of future account, both *of the living and the dead*[g], who shall all be convened before his throne, and receive their final sentence from his lips. And if this were a proper audience wherein to insist upon this subject, I might copiously shew, (as in due time I may do) that *to him all the* Jewish *prophets bear witness*[h], and that from what they foretold concerning him it appears, *that every one who believeth on him shall receive the forgiveness of* their *sins by his name*, though their crimes be attended with aggravations ever so heinous, for which there was no pardon to be had by means of any other dispensation.

SECT. XXIII.

Acts X. 41.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

42

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.

43

While

at Boyle's Lect. Serm. iv. p. 25, 26. *Sermons de Mr. Superville, tom.* iv. p. 9—12. *Bishop Atterbury's Posthum. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 182—190; and *Miscell. Sacra, Essay* ii. p. 77—78.—I shall only observe in one word, that as God was by no means *obliged* to give that perverse people *the Jews* the highest and most striking degree of evidence that could be imagined, (supposing this would have been such,) so it is certain, that the evidence which he gave of this fact, by the *miraculous gifts* conferred on the chosen witnesses of it, was of a nature capable of being conveyed to the world in general in a much more convincing manner, than *Christ's appearance in the temple* for several succeeding days could have been.

g *Appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.*] This was declaring, in the strongest terms, how entirely their happiness depended upon an humble subjection of soul to him, who was to be *their final judge.*

h *To him all the prophets bear witness.*] Compare *note* [f] on Luke xxiv. 27, Vol. II. p. 460.—It is observable, that, in this discourse to an audience of Gentiles, the apostle Peter first mentions *Christ's person, miracles*, and *resurrection*, and contents himself with telling them in the general that there were *many prophets* in former ages *who bore witness to him*, without entering into a particular enumeration of their predictions. And Limborch recommends this as the best way of *beginning the controversy* with the Jews themselves, as being liable to least cavil.—It would however have been easy to have proved the truth of what the apostle here asserts, from several testimonies of the *prophets*, (had it been proper for that audience,) as will appear by comparing Isa. liii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 34. Dan. ix. 24. Mic. vii. 19. Zech. xiii. 1. Mal. iv. 2.—We may farther observe, that we do not read of *Peter's working any miracle* on this great occasion, as the preceding *testimony of the angel*, and the *descent of the Holy Spirit* in his miraculous gifts while he was speaking to them, were *sufficient proofs*, both of the truth of the gospel, and of Peter's being an authorised interpreter of it.

[i] *The*

SECT. XXIII.

While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Spirit, without the imposition of the apostle's hands, *fell* on Cornelius and *upon all* his friends *that were hearing the word*[i], in such a visible appearance of cloven tongues, as that in which he fell upon the apostles and other disciples at the day of Pentecost. (Compare chap. xi. 15.)

Acts X. 44.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 *And* all *they of the circumcision who believed, as many as came with Peter* upon this occasion, *were* exceedingly *astonished*[k], to see *that the* miraculous and important *gift of the Holy Spirit*, which they supposed peculiar to the Jewish nation, *was poured out upon the Gentiles also;* who, as they imagined, could not have been admitted into the church without receiving circumcision, and so subjecting themselves to the ob-

45 And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 servation of the whole Mosaic law. But now they found it was incontestably evident, that even those who were not circumcised might be partakers with them of the highest privileges; *for they heard them* all *speaking in* [*diverse*] *languages* which they had never learned, *and glorifying God* for the rich display of his grace by the gospel, in such exalted sentiments and language, as abundantly proved their minds, as well as their tongues, to be immediately under a divine operation.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 *Then Peter* yielding to the force of evidence, however contrary to his former prejudices, with great propriety *answered, Can any one* reasonably *forbid* that *water* should be brought, or offer to insist upon the common prejudices which has prevailed among us, *that these persons should not be baptized* in the name of our Lord Jesus, and solemnly received into his church[l], *who have*

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received

[i] *The Holy Spirit fell upon all,* &c.] Thus were they consecrated to God, as the *first-fruits of the Gentiles;* and thus did God direct that they should be *baptized,* giving this glorious evidence of his *receiving them* into the Christian church, as well as the Jews.—It is observed by Dr. Lightfoot, that one important effect of this *descent of the Holy Spirit* upon them probably was, that hereby they were enabled to understand the *Hebrew language,* and so had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the prophecies of the *Old Testament* in the *original.*

[k] *They of the circumcision—were astonished.*] The Jews had long ago a *proverb* among them, "That the *Holy Spirit* never rests upon an Heathen." This *astonishment* shews, that notion prevailed even in these Christians, whether the proverb was so old or not.

[l] *Can any one forbid water,* &c.] Erasmus supposes *a trajection* or transposition of the words here, as if it had been said, "Who can forbid, that these should be baptized with water?" But it seems most natural to understand it, (as Dr. Whitby does,) "Who can forbid that water should be brought?" In which view of the clause one would naturally conclude, they were *baptized* by *pouring water* upon them, rather than by *plunging* them in it.

received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?

have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? It is surely his seal set upon them, and it would be an arrogant affront to him to refuse them admission to the fullest communion with us. SECT. XXIII. Acts X. 47.

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

And as none of the brethren that came with him pretended to object any thing against it, *he* immediately *ordered them to be baptized in the name of the Lord* Jesus; choosing to make use of the ministry of his brethren in performing that rite, rather than to do it with his own hands, that by this means the expression of their consent might be the more explicit. *And* being thus received into the church, *they* had so high a value for the conversation of this divine messenger, and for the joyful tidings which he brought them, and were so earnestly desirous to be farther instructed in that faith, into the general profession of which they were baptized, that they *intreated him to continue with them several days*, and omitted nothing in their power to make his abode agreeable, as well as useful. 48

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is no room to wonder, that a man of Cornelius's benevolent character should be solicitous to bring *his kindred and friends* into the way of that divine instruction, which he hoped himself to receive from the revelation now opening upon him. What nobler or more rational office can *friendship* perform and how deficient is every thing that would assume such a name, which doth not extend itself to a care for men's highest and everlasting interests. Ver. 24, 27

It must, no doubt, be some prejudice in favour of Peter on the minds of these strangers, to see that he declined *that profound homage* which good Cornelius, in a rapture of humble devotion, was perhaps something too ready to pay him. The *ministers of Christ* never appear more truly great, than when they arrogate *least to themselves*; and without challenging undue respect, with all simplicity of soul, as *fellow-creatures* and as *fellow-sinners*, are ready to impart *the gospel of Jesus*, in such a manner as to shew that they *honour him* above all, and have learned of him to *honour all men*. 25, 26

That humble subjection of soul to the *divine authority* which Cornelius, in the name of the assembly, expressed, is such as we should always bring along with us to *the house of the Lord:* And happy is that *minister*, who, when he enters the sanctuary, finds his 33

SECT. XXIII.

his people *all present before God, to hear the things* which *God shall give him in charge* to speak to them, and heartily disposed to acquiesce in whatever he shall say, so far as it shall be supported by those *sacred oracles* by which doctrines and men are now to be tried.

Ver. 34, 35 Well might Peter apprehend so natural *a truth* as that which he here professeth, that *God is no respecter of persons*, but every where *accepteth those that fear him*, and express that reverence by *working righteousness:* Let us rejoice in this thought, and while we take care to shew that this is *our own character*, let us pay an impartial regard to it wherever we see it *in others*, still cultivating that *wisdom from above*, which is, *without partiality*, as well as *without hypocrisy*. (Jam. iii. 17.)

36 *We* also *know that* important *word which God sent to Israel,*
43 *preaching peace by Jesus Christ, the Lord of all.* May we know it to saving purposes, and *believing in him receive the remission of our sins in his name!* May we shew ourselves the genuine disciples of this divine Master, by learning of him, according to our abi-
38 lity, to *go about doing good*, sowing, as universally as may be, the seeds of virtue and happiness wherever we come! And then, should the treatment which we meet with be such as *our Lord* found, should we be despised and reproached, should we be per-
39, 40 secuted and at length *slain*, he who *raised up Christ from the dead,*
42 will in due time also *raise up us;* having *suffered*, we shall *reign with him*, (2 Tim. ii. 12.) and share that triumph in which he shall appear as the appointed *Judge* both *of the quick* and *dead.*

41 Let us not esteem it any objection against *his divine mission*, that God did not humour the wantonness of men so far, as to cause him to *appear* in person *to all the people* after his resurrection; it is abundantly enough that he appeared to such a number of *chosen witnesses*, who were thus enabled to evidence the truth of their testimony by the *demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, (1 Cor. ii. 4.) Of this what passed with regard to these converts, when
44, 46 *the Holy Spirit fell upon them* and they *spake with tongues*, is an instance worthy of being had in everlasting remembrance: Let us rejoice in this anointing of *the first-fruits of the Gentiles*, by which their adoption into the family of God was so illustriously
47 48 declared; and let us be ready, after the example of Peter, whatever preconceived prejudices it may oppose, to *receive all* whom *the Lord hath received*, from whatever state his grace hath called them, and cordially to own them as *brethren* whom our heavenly Father himself doth not disdain to number among *his children.*

SECT.

SECT. XXIV.

Peter being questioned about his interview with Cornelius, gives a particular and faithful narration of it, for the satisfaction of his brethren, who were under strong Jewish prejudices. Acts XI. 1—18.

Acts XI. 1.

AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

Acts XI. 1.

THUS Cornelius and his friends were initiated into the Christian religion, as was related above; and Peter abode with them a while at Cæsarea, to confirm them in the faith they had embraced. *But* in the mean time *the apostles, and* other *brethren who were in Judea, heard* in the general *that the* uncircumcised *Gentiles also had received the word of God,* and had been baptized; which very much alarmed them, as they were not informed in all the particular circumstances attending that affair.

SECT. XXIV.

Acts XI. 1.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

And when Peter was come up from Cæsarea *to Jerusalem, they* of the Jewish converts, *who were* still fond *of the circumcision* which they had received, and of the other ceremonial injunctions to which they had submitted, warmly expostulated and *contended with him* about what he had done[a]: *Saying,* there is a strange account come to us lately, and we cannot but hear it with great surprise and displeasure, that *thou didst go in* as a guest *to* the house of *men who were uncircumcised, and didst eat* and drink as freely *with them* as if they had been God's peculiar people as well as ourselves; a thing, as thou well knowest, quite unexampled among us.

2

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

3

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from

And upon this *Peter beginning* from the vision he

4

[a] *Contended with him.*] How good an argument soever this may be, as Bishop Burnet and many others urge it against the *supremacy of Peter,* it is none against the *inspiration of the apostles;* for it only proves, that *some,* who did not well understand the principles on which they went, took upon them, without reason, to *arraign their conduct,* and consequently did not in this respect pay a becoming deference to them. It plainly shews, *how little regard* was had to *any uncircumcised persons,* whatever profession they might make of worshipping *the God of Israel,* and is therefore very inconsistent with what has generally been supposed, and so much insisted upon, of *the great difference* which the Jews made between those who are commonly called *proselytes of the gate* and the *idolatrous Gentiles.* Had it been used to distinguish them so much in their regards, Peter would not have needed to vindicate his conduct by urging *the vision,* since he knew from the first mention of Cornelius to him, (chap. x. 22.) that he was φοβουμενος τον Θεον, *one who feared God,* that is, as these critics would explain it, *a proselyte of the gate.*

SECT. XXIV.

Acts XI. 4.

he had seen, which was evidently designed to dispose him to such a condescension, *opened to them* [*the matter*] *in order*[b], and gave them a full detail of all the particulars with the exactest
5 truth and simplicity, *saying*, *I was*, just before this extraordinary event happened, which I confess may well surprise you, *praying*, in a proper place of retirement, in the house of Simon the tanner *in the city of Joppa; and in a trance I saw a* remarkable *vision*, even *something like a great sheet descending from heaven*, which was *let down by the four corners; and* it was so
6 directed, that *it came close to me. And* as I was *looking attentively upon it, I observed and saw* a great variety of *four-footed creatures of the earth, and wild beasts and reptiles, and fowls of the air:* But I took notice of this circumstance, that they were all of sorts prohibited
7 by our law[c]. *And I heard a voice* from heaven *saying to me, Arise Peter, kill* any of these animals that are here before thee, *and eat* freely
8 of whatever thou pleasest. *But I said, by no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean*, nothing prohibited in itself, or polluted by any accident, *hath ever entered into my mouth*, and by thy grace nothing of that kind ever shall.
9 *And the voice answered me the second time from heaven, Those things which God hath cleansed*, by bidding thee to eat of them, *do not thou* any
10 more *call common. And this was done three times*, exactly with the same circumstances, that it might make the greater impression upon my mind: *And* at length *all the things* which I had seen *were drawn up again into heaven.*
11 *And behold, at that instant*, as soon as the vision was over, while I was thinking what might be the meaning of it, *three men were come to* the

from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me.

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven. What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times; and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where

[b] *Peter opened to them* [*the matter*] *in order.*] As it is probable, that they were only some of the *Jewish converts*, who questioned Peter about what he had done, he might, no doubt, have overborne them, by urging his *apostolical authority*, and referring them to the *miracles* by which it was established: But he chose to treat them in a more gentle and condescending manner, giving therein a most amiable example of *humility* and *condescension*, which it will be the glory and happiness of *gospel-ministers* to follow, in circumstances which bear any resemblance to this.

[c] Were all of sorts prohibited by our law.] There is no sufficient reason to suppose, as most have done, that *all manner* of living creatures, *clean and unclean*, were presented to Peter in his vision: for though it be expressed in very general terms, especially in the first account of it, (chap. x. 12,) yet it is manifest, there would have been no room for *Peter's scrupling to eat* had he seen any creatures there, but what he apprehended to be *prohibited by the law.* And the *translation* I have given of that *verse*, which perfectly agrees with the *original*, will not oblige us to suppose, that any animals were there, but such as were esteemed *unclean.*

[d] *God*

where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter:

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

the door of *the house in which I was*, who were *sent from Cæsarea to me* by Cornelius the centurion. *And* immediately *the Spirit commanded me to go with them, without any scruple* or debate; accordingly I went, *and these six brethren also*, who are here present, and are witnesses of all that happened afterwards, *went along with me; and we* arrived at Cæsarea, and *entered into the man's house. And* when I had inquired what was the reason of his sending for me, *he* presently *told us how he had seen an angel standing* by him *in his house, and saying to him, Send men to Joppa, and fetch hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall* instruct thee in the way of life, and *speak words to thee by which thou and all thy family shall be saved*, if they are attended to with a proper regard.

And as I began to speak, before I had made any considerable progress in my discourse, *the Holy Spirit fell upon them*, in the visible form of cloven tongues of fire, *even as* it did *upon us at the beginning* of our public ministry, after the ascension of our blessed Lord. (Chap. ii. 3, 4.) *And* this was so extraordinary an occurrence, that *I* immediately *remembered*, and could not but seriously reflect upon *the word of the Lord* Jesus, as then remarkably verified, *how he said* but just before his ascension, (chap i. 5.) *John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit;* for this pouring forth of the Spirit upon them appeared to be a kind of baptism, whereby that prediction was wonderfully accomplished. *Since therefore God* himself, the sovereign dispenser of his own favours, *gave to them the* very *same gift, as* [*he did*] *to us who had* before *believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I should be able to prohibit God*, or should presume to oppose myself against his wise and gracious pleasure? It rather appeared to me, as I persuade myself it must to you, my brethren, matter of congratulation and praise, than of cavil or complaint.

And when they heard these things, they acquiesced in them with pleasure, *and glorified God* for so wonderful a manifestation of his rich grace, *saying, God hath then given to the* poor *Gentiles also repentance unto life*[d], and has not only

SECT. XXIV.

Acts XI. 12.

13

14

15

16

17

18

[d] *God hath then given to the Gentiles also repentance unto life.*] In this they acquiesced for the present, till the controversy was renewed by some fiercer zealots.

SECT. XXIV. only made them the overtures of it, but has graciously wrought it in some of their hearts; and we shall rejoice to see it prevailing more and more.

Acts XI. 18.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2 WITH what joy ought every one who loved God or man to have heard, that *the Gentiles had received the word of the gospel;* yet we find *those of the circumcision* disputing with Peter upon the occasion: Their prejudices as Jews were so strong, that they thought the passage to the *church* must still lie through the *synagogue*, and *so* remembered that they were *disciples of Moses*, as almost to forget that they were the *disciples of Christ.* Let us always guard against that narrowness of mind which would *limit* even *the Holy One of Israel* to the bounds which we shall mark out, and exclude others from his favour, that our own honour may appear so much the more signal.

4 & seq. But let us with pleasure observe the *mildness* and *prudence* of Peter; warm as his temper naturally was, and high as he was raised by the divine favour; though he had been so remarkably turning *the key of the kingdom of heaven* itself, and opening it by immediate divine direction to the *uncircumcised*, that they might enter; yet he stands not upon the general honours of his *apostolic character*, nor insists upon that *implicit submission to him*, which some, with no such credentials, have been ready to arrogate to themselves. But he *condescends to the younger brethren*, and gives them a plain, distinct and faithful narration of the whole matter, just as it was. Thus let us learn, in the spirit of gentleness, humility and love, to *vindicate our actions*, where they have been uncandidly mistaken. And when we have the pleasure to know that they are *right*, let us enjoy that happy reflection to such a degree, as not to suffer ourselves to be disquieted, and put out of temper, by the *rash charges* and *censures* of those, who will *judge our conduct* before they have examined into it; and are disposed, more to their own detriment than it can possibly be to ours, to *err on the severe extreme.*

Peter

chap. xv. 1, 5. But I beg leave to observe here, that it would have been very improper for them thus to have spoken of *the Gentiles* in general, if they had only meant *such*, as had already *forsaken idolatry*, and were worshippers of the true God. They plainly speak of those to whom *this repentance was granted*, as persons who before, according to their apprehension, were in a state of death; in which condition, it is probable they had thought *all uncircumcised persons* to be: and without doubt, they must mean to include *the idolatrous Gentiles* among the rest, as those who were most evidently and certainly so.—To render this clause, "God has granted salvation to the Gentiles on the terms of their repentance," is, I think, determining and limiting the sense in an unwarrantable manner.

Peter, we see, very circumstantially *recollected* what he had seen, and heard. Let it also be our care to treasure up in our memory, and to inscribe on our hearts, whatever God shall be pleased, though in more ordinary methods of instruction, to discover to us. And never let us be *disobedient* to any intimation of the divine will; but on the contrary, always most cheerfully acquiesce in it. *Who are we, that* in any respect *we should resist God?* and particularly, *who are we*, that we should in effect do it, by laying down *rules* relating to *Christian communion*, which should exclude any whom he has admitted? O that *all the churches*, whether national or separate, might be led seriously to consider, how arrogant an *usurpation* that is on the authority of the supreme Lord of the church! O that the sin of *this resistance to God* may not be laid to the charge of those, who perhaps in the main *with a good intention*, in an overfondness for their own forms, have done it, and are continually doing it!

SECT. XXIV. Ver. 17

Like these *brethren of the circumcision*, let us be willing to *yield to the force of evidence*, even when it leads us into an unexpected path. And let us *glorify God*, when he is pleased to *manifest himself to those*, who seemed to us to have the least room to hope for such a favour. Whether it be to us, or to others, *that God hath granted repentance unto life*, may we rejoice in it, and adore his goodness therein! For it is certain that none of the delights of life, which men so fondly pursue, are half so valuable as that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation.*

18

SECT. XXV.

The gospel is preached at Antioch. Barnabas coming thither confirms the disciples, who are there called Christians. Agabus visits them, and foretells the famine, which occasions their sending alms to Jerusalem. Acts XI. 19, *to the end.*

Acts XI. 19. NOW they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

Acts XI. 19.

SECT. XXV. Acts XI. 19.

IT is *now* proper to mention some other circumstances, relating to the church elsewhere. We observe *therefore*, that during the transactions which have been before related, *they who were dispersed* from Jerusalem *by the distress* and persecution *which arose about Stephen*, after they had gone through Judea and Samaria, (chap. viii. 1.) *travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word* of the gospel *to none but the Jews only*; not being at all apprehensive, that the Gentiles were to share in the blessings

SECT. XXV.

Acts XI. 20.

blessings of it. *But some of them*, who bore a part in this work, *were men* that were natives of the island *of Cyprus, and* of the province of *Cyrene* in Africa, *who* having heard the story of Peter's receiving Cornelius, though a Gentile, into the communion of the church, took occasion from thence to imitate his example, and *having entered into Antioch*[a], *spake* freely *to the Greeks*[b] as well as to the Jews; *preaching* the gospel of *the Lord Jesus* to them, and inviting them to accept of his invaluable privileges.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 *And the hand of the Lord was* remarkably *with them* in this pious labour; *and a great number* of the Gentiles were so effectually convinced and wrought upon by their discourses and miracles, that they *believed, and turned unto the Lord* Jesus; consecrating themselves to the service of God through him, with the most humble dependance on his blood and grace.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 *And the report concerning him came to the ears of the church that was at Jerusalem*, who, as they had lately seen a way was opened for the conversion of the Gentiles, received the tidings of this further progress of the gospel with peculiar pleasure; *and*, desirous to confirm them in the faith into which they had been initiated, *they sent forth Barnabas to go as far as Antioch*: 23 *Who when he was come* thither, *and beheld the grace of God* manifested towards them in bringing them to the knowledge of himself

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church, which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad,

[a] *Having entered into Antioch.*] This is an account very different from that which *Ecclesiastical History* gives us, which affirms that *Peter* was *the first* who preached the gospel at *Antioch;* which I mention to shew, how little these traditions are to be depended upon, as to the *first settlement* of Christian churches in the world; of which I think we know little certain, but from the *New Testament*. It seems more probable, that *Simon, Lucius,* and *Manaen,* who are mentioned, chap. xiii. 1. might be the first preachers here.——*Antioch* was then the capital of *Syria,* and next to *Rome* and *Alexandria,* was the most considerable city of the empire.

[b] *Spake to the Greeks.*] Instead of Ελληνας the *Alexandrian manuscript,* which is favoured by the *Syriac* and some other ancient *versions,* reads Ελληνας; which common sense would require us to adopt, even if it were not supported by the authority of any *manuscript* at all: For as the Hellenists were Jews, there would, on the received reading, be no opposition between the conduct of these preachers, and those mentioned in the preceding verse. Here undoubtedly we have the first account of preaching the gospel to the *idolatrous Gentiles;* for it is certain, there is nothing in the word Ελληνας to limit it, to such as were *worshippers of the true God:* Nor can I find the least hint in the *New Testament* of the *two different periods* that some have supposed, in the *first* of which it was preached only to those called *proselytes of the gate,* and in the *second* to those who were before *idolaters;* yet the hypothesis seems in itself so improbable, that it stands in need of the strongest proof before it can be admitted, as I may elsewhere shew at large. It is well known, that as the Greeks were the most celebrated of the Gentile nations near Judea, the Jews called *all the Gentiles* by that general name. Compare Rom. x. 12. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Gal. iii. 28. Col iii. 11. See also 2 Mac. iv. 10, 15, 36. vi. 9. xi. 24.

glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord.

himself in a Redeemer, greatly *rejoiced* in the good work that was begun among them, *and exhorted them all to adhere to the Lord with full determination* and resolution *of heart*, whatever circumstances of difficulty and extremity might arise. And the exhortation, as it came from his mouth, was peculiarly graceful and effectual; *for he was a good man* himself[c], *and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith*; and speaking from the deep experience of his own heart, and with that full authority which so exemplary a life gave him, as well as with such extraordinary divine assistance, he was the happy means, not only of confirming the faith of those who had already embraced the gospel, but of bringing others to an acquaintance with it: *And* thus *a considerable number* believed, and *were added unto the Lord*, and were by baptism received into the church.

SECT. XXV. Acts XI. 23.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: And much people was added unto the Lord.

24

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul.

Then Barnabas perceiving, after some abode there, that he wanted an assistant in his labours, *went to Tarsus to seek Saul*[d], whose departure thither we mentioned above, in the last particulars which we related concerning him. (Compare Acts ix. 30.)

25

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch.—

And finding him there, he gave him such an account of the state of things, and such a view of the probability of extensive usefulness, which seemed to present itself there, that *he* succeeded in his proposal, and *brought him to Antioch*[e], at his return to that populous and celebrated city.

26

—And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people; and the disciples were

And it came to pass, that they continued there, and *assembled* at proper times *in the church for a whole year, and taught considerable numbers* of people: *And the disciples were by divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch*[f]; a title that

[c] *A good man.*] The author of *Miscell. Sacra* thinks the expression signifies, that he was a man of a sweet and gentle disposition, not disposed to lay any unnecessary burdens on these new converts, and so the more fit to be employed at Antioch in these circumstances. *Abstract*, p. 18.

[d] *Went to Tarsus to seek Saul.*] I have never been able to discover, on what foundation the ingenious writer mentioned in the last note asserts, that this was the *second time* of Saul's being at Tarsus after his conversion, and that he had in the mean time, (that is, since his first journey thither, Acts ix. 30.) made the tour of *Syria*, and preached the gospel there.

[e] *Finding him he brought him to Antioch.*] This he might do, as very rightly judging, that since he was by his country *a Greek*, though by descent a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, (that is, descended from *two Jewish parents*) he would be peculiarly fit to assist him in his great work; especially considering, on the one hand, his fine accomplishments as a scholar, and on the other, his extraordinary conversion and eminent piety and zeal.

[f] *By divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch.*] They were before this called by the Jews, *Nazarenes*, or *Galileans*; and by each other, *disciples*, *believers*, *brethren*, or *saints*. But they now assumed the name of their great leader, as the *Platonists*

SECT. XXV.

Acts XI. 26.

that was really an honour to them, and was very well adapted to signify their relation to Christ as their common Lord, and their expectations from him as their Saviour.

were called Christians first at Antioch.

27 *And in these days*, while Barnabas and Saul were at Antioch, certain *prophets*, who were divinely inspired to foretell future events, *came* 28 *from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them, whose name was Agabus, stood up* in one of their assemblies, *and signified by* the immediate direction of *the Spirit, that there should shortly be a great famine over all the land*[g]; *which* accordingly *came to pass* quickly after *in the days of Claudius Cæsar*, the Roman emperor then 29 reigning. *And*, in consideration of the distress which it might bring along with it, *the disciples* at Antioch *determined, that according to the respective abilities of each*[h], *they should send* a liberal

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief

Platonists, Pythagoreans, Epicureans, &c. with much less reason had done the name of theirs. I think with Dr. Benson, that the use of the word χρηματίσαι implies, that it *was done by a divine direction*, and have translated it accordingly: (Compare Matt. ii. 12, 22. Luke ii. 26. Acts x. 22 Heb. viii. 5. xi. 7. xii. 25.) and therefore am not solicitous to enquire, whether the name were given them, as *Ecclesiastical History* tells us, by *Euodius*, (who is mentioned by it as their *first bishop*,) or by Barnabas, or Saul, as Bishop Pearson seems to think. (See *Pears.* on the *Creed*, p 103.) The learned and candid Witsius thinks it a circumstance of remarkable wisdom, that this celebrated name should arise from Antioch, a church consisting of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, rather than from Jerusalem dignified in so many other respects; and that it was a kind of victory gained over Satan, who from Antioch had some ages before raised so many cruel persecutors of the church of God. *Wits. de Vit. Paul. cap.* iii. § 5.

g *A great famine over all the land.*] As it is certain, οικουμενη may have such a limited signification, (see *note* [a] on Luke ii. 1, Vol. VI. p. 62) I follow *this translation*, as what appears to me safest, and refer my reader to those reasons for doing it, which he may find at large in *Mr. Lardner's Credibility.* (Book I. chap. 11, § 2. Vol. I. p. 589, *& seq.*) The learned Archbishop Usher has endeavoured to prove the *famine* in the fourth year of Claudius [*A. D.* 44,] universal. But Mr. Biscoe rather thinks, there may be a reference here to what happened in a course of some years, and observes, (as Mr. Basnage had done before,) that there were *famines* in various places during the reign of Claudius, not only in Judea, which began the latter end of his fourth, and was continued in his fifth, sixth, and seventh years, (of which Josephus takes notice, *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 2. § 6. *& cap.* 5, [al. 3,] § 3,) but also at Rome in his second; (as mentioned by Dio, *lib.* lx. p. 671;) and that Syria in his fourth, *(Oros. lib.* vii. *cap.* 6,) Greece in his ninth, *(Euseb. Chron.* p. 204,) and Italy in his tenth and eleventh, *(Tacit. Annal. lib.* xii. *cap.* 43. and *Sueton. Claud. cap.* 18.) were visited with the like calamity: He therefore supposes *all these* to be included in this prophecy. *(Serm. at Boyle's Lect. chap.* iii. § 3. p. 60—66.) But the persons, with regard to whom it is here mentioned, were so much more concerned in *the first* of these, which seems also to have been the most extreme, that I am still of opinion, the prediction chiefly refers to that, which was *the dearth* in which Helena queen of Adiabene so generously relieved the Jews with corn and other provisions from Egypt and Cyprus; which, by the way, proves that *the famine* was *not universal* at that time. See *Wits. Meletem. de Vit. Paul. cap.* iii. § 6.

h *According to the respective abilities of each.*] I think this all that is intended by καθως τις ευποριτο, though the words might more literally be rendered, *according to the abundance which each had:* for it is hardly to be imagined, that *every Christian* at Antioch was *in abundance* or plentiful *circumstances:* Nor do I think any thing can be inferred, concerning *the extent of the famine*, from this circumstance; as it plainly appears *not to have been begun*, when the collection was resolved upon.

i *They*

lief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea.

ral contribution *to the assistance of the* believing *brethren, who dwelt* in such great numbers *in Judea* [i], and had many poor among them, who would particularly need to be supported in a time of such calamity. *And this* accordingly *they did, sending* [*it*] *to the elders* [k] to be delivered to the deacons, or to be otherwise distributed as they should think fit: being satisfied that they would make a prudent use of what they sent them upon this occasion *by the hand of Barnabas and Saul,* who took the money they had collected to Jerusalem; and as the famine lasted for some time, were afterwards employed in prosecuting this generous and necessary work by new collections elsewhere.

SECT. XXV.

Acts XI. 27.

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

30

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us with pleasure observe, how in the instance here recorded, *the blood of a martyr* was *the seed of the church;* an event afterwards so common, that it became *a proverb.* Thus *they who were scattered abroad* on the death of Stephen every where *dispersed the gospel;* and let us be thankful that some of them brought it *to the Gentiles* as well as *to the Jews.* Freely did it *run,* and illustriously was it *glorified;* But with whatever evidence and advantage they preached it, with whatever spirit and zeal (in some measure the natural consequence of having been called to suffer so dearly for it) the success of all is to be traced up to *the hand of the Lord* that *was with them.* This engaged men *to believe and turn unto the Lord;* to stop in their career of sin, to pause

Ver. 19

20

21

i *They should send to the assistance,* &c.] Vitringa has shewn at large, that it was common for the Jews, who lived in foreign parts, to send relief in times of distress to their *poor brethren* at Jerusalem. (*Vitring. de Synag. vet. lib.* iii. Part I. *cap.* 13, p. 809—811.) This tender care in these *Gentile converts* at Antioch would tend powerfully to conciliate the affections of their *circumcised brethren,* and was some acknowledgment, though not an equivalent, for the *voluntary poverty* many of the saints in Judea had incurred by the sale of their estates, as well as for the *peculiar persecutions* which they underwent from their unbelieving countrymen.

k *Sending it to the elders.*] I am much surprised, that a person of Dr. Whitby's judgment should think the persons here spoken of were the *elders of the Jewish synagogues,* considering that these were the men, who would of all others have been most ready to injure and defraud the Christians. It seems much more rational with the late Lord Barrington, to conclude from hence, that there was now no *apostles* at Jerusalem, and that the *elders,* having been competently instructed in Christianity, were left to *take care of the church* there; while the *apostles* took a tour into the neighbouring parts more fully to instruct and confirm the new converts. (*Miscell. Sacr.* Essay ii. p. 110. *& seq.*) This is the first mention that we have of *elders* in the christian church; and Dr. Hammond has a large and very remarkable note here, in which he labours to prove, that these *elders* were the *same officers* with these called επισκοποι or *bishops* and thinks there is no certain evidence from scripture, that the name of *elders* or *presbyters* was given so early to *another order* between *them* and *deacons:* But this is not a place to enter accurately into enquiries of this nature.

SECT. XXV.

pause upon their conduct, to accept of the *Lord Jesus Christ* as the Saviour, and to consecrate themselves to God through him. O that *his hand* might be *with all his ministers!* O that such success might every where be produced by its powerful operations!

23 Well might Barnabas *rejoice* when he saw such a scene, and *more distant brethren* be pleased when they *heard of it*; for what is the triumph of *the gospel* but the triumph of *human happiness?* And who, that has cordially received the gospel, does not feel his whole heart most tenderly interested in that? He wisely and properly *exhorted them*, having once embraced this divine and glorious dispensation, *with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord;* and there was great need of such an exhortation, as well as a very solid foundation for it: Such difficulties will arise in our christian course, though we should not meet with persecutions like theirs, that we shall need a most steady *resolution of mind* in order to our *adherence to the Lord;* but let us *arm ourselves* with it, and *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering* since *he is* invariably *faithful who hath promised.* (Heb. x. 23.) Such exhortations as these will be most effectual when they come, as in this instance they evidently did, from *a good man,*

24 whose example will add authority to his words, and so be a means not only to quicken religion in the hearts of those who have already embraced it, but to propagate it to those who are yet strangers to it.

With pleasure let us reflect upon this honourable *name,* which *the disciples* of Jesus *first* wore at Antioch; they were called *christians,* as it seems *by divine appointment:* And would to

26 God that no other, no dividing name, had ever prevailed among them! As for such *distinguishing titles,* though they were taken from Apollos, or Cephas, or Paul, let us endeavour to exclude them out of the church as fast as we can; and while they continue in it, let us take great care that they do not make us forget *our most ancient* and most glorious *title.* Let us take heed, that we do not so remember *our difference* from each other in smaller matters, as to forget *our mutual agreement* in embracing the gospel of Christ, and in professing to submit ourselves to *him* as our common *Prince and Saviour.*

27–30 The notice of the *famine* brought to them by Agabus the prophet, awakened the generosity of *the christians at Antioch,* to supply the pressing necessities of *the saints in Judea.* The possibility, at least, that it might have affected themselves, would have led some to conclude it the part of prudence to keep what they had to themselves: But they argued much more wisely, chusing thus *to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come,* and to secure a title to that peculiar care of divine providence which

which is promised and engaged to those who *mind not every one his own things*, but each *the welfare of others* and of all. (Phil. ii. 4.) SECT. XXV.

SECT. XXVI.

Herod having slain James, seizes Peter, and commits him to prison, who is delivered by an angel, in answer to the prayers of the church. Acts XII. 1—19.

Acts XII. 1.
NOW about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.

ACT XII. 1.

SECT. XXVI.

NOW about that time, when Saul and Barnabas were preparing to set out for Jerusalem, to carry thither what had been collected by the christians at Antioch for the relief of the saints in Judea, *Herod* Agrippa[a] *the king*, abusing the authority with which he was invested by the Roman emperor, *laid hands* in a very injurious manner *on some of the church to* persecute and *afflict them*. *And* he carried this injustice so far, that *he* even *slew James* the son of Zebedee, *the brother of John*, one of those three apostles whom Jesus honoured with such peculiar intimacy; beheading him *with the sword*[b], as an enemy to the state, as well as an opposer of the law of Moses. Acts XII. 1. 2

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

And

a *Herod* Agrippa.] So the *Syriac* expressly renders it; and there is no reason to doubt, especially considering the similarity of circumstances mentioned below that *this Herod* was the Prince whom Josephus calls *Agrippa*, which probably was his *Roman* as *Herod* was his *Syrian name*. He was not (as Grotius by a slip of memory says,) *the son* but *the grandson*, of *Herod the Great* by his son Aristobulus, (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 5. [al. 7.] § 4.) nephew to Herod Antipas who beheaded *John the Baptist*, brother to Herodias whom that incestuous and adulterous tetrach married, and father to that better Agrippa, before whom Paul made his defence. (Acts. xxv. 13. & *seq.*) Caius Caligula with whom he had an early friendship, when he became emperor, released *this Agrippa* from the confinement under which Tiberius had (on that very account) kept him, and crowned him king of the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, to which he afterwards added the territories of Antipas, whom he banished to Lyons in Gaul. (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 10, 11. & *cap.* 7, [al. 9.] § 2.) In this authority Claudius confirmed him, and made him *king of Judea*, adding to his former dominions those of Lysanias. (*Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 5. [al. 4.] § 1. Mr. Fleming thinks, it was *high treason against the Messiah* for him to assume the title of *king of Judea*, and that this arrogancy, joined with his cruelty, rendered him more worthy of that terrible death described below. *Flem. Christol.* Vol. III. p. 358.

b *Slew James — with the sword.*] Thus was *our Lord's* prediction relating to him fulfilled. (Mat. xx. 23.) I know not how far we are to depend upon the *tradition*, which we find cited by Eusebius, (*Eccles. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 9.) from a book of Clemens Alexandrinus now lost, in which he reported, "that the person who had accused James observing the courage with which he bore his testimony to christianity, was converted, and suffered martyrdom with him." But I think it is very beautifully observed by Clarius, (who had a great deal of the true spirit of criticism,) that this early execution of *one of the apostles*, after our Lord's death would illustrate the courage of the rest in going on with their ministry, as it would evidently shew that even all their miraculous powers did not secure them from dying by the sword of their enemies.

c *Saw*

SECT. XXVI.

And as he found that no immediate vengeance overtook him on this account, and likewise *saw that [this] was acceptable to the Jews* [c], whose favour he laboured by all possible means to conciliate, *he went on* farther, and presumed *to seize Peter also*, renowned as he was for such a variety of miracles, which were wrought by him at Jerusalem in the name of Jesus: *And it was in the days of unleavened bread*, during the feast of the passover that Peter was apprehended. *And having seized him* at this public time, when so many Jews were come together from all parts, *he put him in prison delivering him to the custody of four quaternions of soldiers*, that is, to sixteen, consisting of four in each party, who were to relieve each other by turns, watching him constantly by day and night: This Herod ordered for the greater security of so noted a person, *intending* immediately *after the passover to bring him out to the people*, to be made a spectacle to them in what he should suffer; as Jesus his master had been on the first day of unleavened bread.

Acts XII. 3.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 *In the mean time therefore*, till the day of execution came, *Peter was* thus *kept in the prison. But* as the importance of so useful a life was well known to his christian friends, *earnest and continued prayer was*, with great intenseness and assiduity of mind, *made to God on his account, by the* whole *church* at Jerusalem. *And* the event quickly shewed that this their earnest supplication was not in vain; for *when Herod was ready to have brought him out* to execution, [*even*] *that very night*, before he had designed to do it, *Peter was* quietly *sleeping between two soldiers*, in full calmness and serenity of mind, though *bound with two chains* [d], which joined each of his hands to one of the soldiers that lay on either side of him, in such a manner that it was (humanly speaking) impossible he should have risen without immediately awaking them: *And the* other two *guards* then on duty stood centry

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

[c] *Saw that this was acceptable to the Jews.*] Josephus tells us, "that this prince was a great zealot for the *Mosaic law*, that he dwelt much at Jerusalem, and was fond of all opportunities of obliging the Jews, as his grand-father Herod had been of pleasing *strangers*," a character well suiting what Luke here says of him. See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* vii. § 3.

[d] *Bound with two chains.*] It is well known, that this way of securing prisoners of importance, by *chaining each of their hands to a guard*, was practised among the Romans, and the reader may find authorities to this purpose produced by Grotius, in his *note* on Acts xxviii. 16. and by Mr. Lardner, (now Dr. Lardner) *Credib.* Book I. chap. 10. § 9. Vol. I. p. 521, 522.

Acts XII. 6.

centry *before the door*, and *were keeping the prison*, that there might be no attempt of any kind made to rescue him; because he was looked upon as a prisoner of great consequence.

7 And behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

7 *And behold*, an astonishing deliverance was wrought out for him in all this extremity of danger; for *an angel of the Lord presented himself* on a sudden, *and a* glorious *light shone in the* whole *house*, dark and gloomy as it was: *And* this heavenly messenger was no sooner come, but *giving Peter a* gentle *blow on the side, he awoke him, saying, Arise quickly. And* at the same moment of time both *his chains fell off from his hands:* Yet the soldiers were by a miraculous power kept so fast asleep, that they were not at all alarmed by the noise of their fall.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals: And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

8 *And the angel said to him, Gird thyself* presently in the clothes thou hast on, tie thine inward garment about thee, *and bind on thy sandals*, that thou mayest walk out; *and* accordingly *he did so. And he says to him* farther, *Throw thy mantle round thee, and follow me* out.

9 And he went out, and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

9 *And* Peter *going out* of the prison, as *he* was guided by the angel, met with no opposition in his way, and *followed him* as he was ordered: *And* he was so astonished, that *he did not know that what was done by the angel was true* and real, *but* only *supposed that he had seen a vision*, as in some other instances he had done.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city which opened to them of his own accord: And they went out, and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him.

10 *And passing through the first and second watch*, where the guards were all asleep, *they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which* though it was a heavy gate, and very strongly fastened, yet was no hindrance in their way, but *opened to them* as *of its own accord. And* thus *going out* into the city, *they went* together *through one street; and immediately the angel*, having done all that was requisite for his deliverance, and set him at full liberty, *departed from him* on a sudden, and left him alone to go where he pleased.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

11 *And Peter being come to himself*, and recovered from the first astonishment of such an extraordinary event, *said, Now I know truly that the Lord* Jesus Christ, in whose cause I was going to suffer, *hath* (as he formerly did, chap. v. 19.) *sent his angel*, one of the many heavenly spirits under his command, *and hath delivered me from the hand of Herod*, who intended my death, *and from all the expectation of the Jewish people:* who, after the many beneficial miracles I have wrought

SECT. XXVI. Acts XII. 12.

wrought among them, were thirsting for my blood, and waited impatiently to see my execution.

Such was the grateful sense that Peter had of his deliverance; *and recollecting* where he was,[e] *he* presently concluded whither to go, and *came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was sirnamed Mark, where many* Christians *were gathered together*, and were spending the night in *praying* earnestly for his deliverance: And God answered them, while they were yet speaking; for he had now discharged the prisoner for whom they were so much concerned and brought him to the very house in which they were assembled. *And as Peter* stood, and *knocked at the door, of the outer gate*[f] which entered into the house; that they might guard against the danger of admitting any person whom they did not know, *a maiden whose name was Rose, went* to the door, *to* listen and *enquire who was there*.[g] *And* he had no sooner answered, but *knowing Peter's voice*, she was so *transported with joy* and surprise, that *she did not open the gate; but running* to the company that were assembled in the house, *she told* [*them*] *that Peter was* actually *standing at the gate.* *And they said to her*, Surely *thou art distracted*, to imagine so incredible and so impossible a thing. *But she* persisted in it, that she was sure she heard his voice; and *confidently affirmed that it was* undoubtedly *so. Then*, as they knew not how to account for it, *they said*, in their confusion of thought, *It is* then probably *his angel*, who has assumed his form to bring us some tidings of him; or perhaps he is executed

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together, praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed, that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

[e] *Recollecting* where he was.] This is so natural an interpretation of συνιδων, that there seems no need of Dr. Hammond's conjectural emendation, who would read it σπευδων *making haste*, as he also would, chap. xiv. 6.

[f] *At the door of the outer gate.*] Though De Dieu, chiefly on the authority of Kimchi, in his distinction between שער and מתח interprets this of a kind of *wicket* in a pair of *great gates*, I apprehend (according to the accurate and useful description which Dr. Shaw has given of the houses in the east,) that the word πυλων here properly signifies what we generally call the *gateway* of a large house, by which, if there be *an area* surrounded with buildings, you pass into it. And it is probable, that this was no small house, as *many were assembled* there.

[g] *To enquire who was there.*] That this is the most exact signification of the original word υπακουσαι, is abundantly demonstrated by Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 159.) and Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 411.) I render this maiden's name *Rhoda* by the English name *Rose*, as whenever I meet with *Greek names* in use among us, I think it most natural to give the *English termination*; and shall only add, that Grotius has well observed, *the Jews*, frequently gave to their female children the name of agreeable flowers or plants: Thus *Susannah* signifies a lily, *Hedessa*, a myrtle, *Tamer* a palm-tree, &c.

h *It*

executed in prison, (as John the Baptist was in the night,) and his separate spirit has appeared, as a token of its being employed, as angels are, in ministring to the church on earth [h]. Acts XII. 15.

16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

But Peter in the mean time *continued knocking*, upon which they went out several of them together; *and when they had opened [the door,] they saw him, and* rejoiced to find that he was there, but *were* exceedingly *astonished* at the sight of him. 16

17 But he beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

And as he found upon his coming in among them, that his presence threw them into a confused transport, which grew so loud that he could not easily be heard, *he beckoned to them with [his] hand to be silent, and related to them how the Lord had conducted him out of prison*, by the ministry of an angel: *And* having told them the particulars of what had passed, *he said*, Let care be taken to *inform James* [l], *and the* other *brethren of these things*, that they may magnify God for this great deliverance, and consider it as an engagement to serve him with greater resolution and zeal. *And* presently *departing* from thence, *he went to another place* [k], and continued some time in retirement, that he might avoid the search which his persecutors would of course make for him, when they should find that he was gone. 17

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no

And accordingly, *as soon as it was day, there was no small tumult among the soldiers* on his account, and no search was spared that they might know 18

[h] *It is his angel*, &c.] Though I have followed the more common rendering here, I pretend not certainly to say, that Sir Thomas Browne is mistaken, (in his *Religio Medici*, p. 19.) when he says, (as Clarius, Cameron, and Hammond also do,) that the word αγγελος here signifies messenger, as to be sure it often does. (Compare Mat. xi. 10. Mark i. 2. Luke vii. 24, 27. ix. 52. and Jam. ii. 25.) They might perhaps think, he had sent somebody, who telling her, *he came from Peter*, she by mistake apprehended it to be him. But I think it much more probable, that, as she averred that she *knew his voice*, they then judged it to be something *supernatural*. It is by no means certain, they imagined this to be *his guardian angel*; for Philo speaks of it as *a received notion* among the Jews, that the souls of good men deceased officiated as ministring spirits. (See *Phil. de Sacrif. Cain & Abelis*, p. 131. & *de Gigantibus*, p. 286. and *Dr. Waterland's Serm.* Vol. II. p. 90.) 91.) But whatever *their notion was*, one way or other, no argument can be drawn from it, as to the *truth* of either of these suppositions.

[i] *Inform James.*] As *James the brother of John* was dead, (ver. 2.) the person here referred to must be *James the Less, the brother*, or kinsman *of our Lord*, and author of the *General epistle* which bears his name. He appears to have been a person of considerable weight and importance: Peter therefore particularly directs the message *to him* for his encouragement, and to engage the concurrence of his thanksgiving to God, on account of this extraordinary deliverance.

[k] *Went to another place.*] It was convenient he should withdraw from Jerusalem; but it is utterly incredible, that he now went to Rome, and made that abode of twenty-five years there, which the Popish writers pretend. The absurdity of which pretence has been abundantly demonstrated by many Protestant writers, and by none more pertinently, in a few words, than by Beza on this place.

[l] *What*

SECT. XXVI.

know *what was become of Peter*[1]. For the guards awaking out of their sound sleep, could none of them give any account of what had passed, and were ready to suspect and accuse each other of negligence or treachery, in giving the prisoner an opportunity to make his escape. *And* indeed very fatally for them had he escaped; for *Herod searching for him, and not finding him, examined the keepers*, as strictly as possibly; *and* as he could make nothing out by his enquiry, but that he was gone while they slept, and thought it by no means prudent to give any intimation that he suspected a miraculous interposition of Providence in favour of a man whom he had devoted to destruction, he *ordered them to be* immediately *led away to execution*[m] for their negligence; and so the affair ended, and shortly after his life too, as we shall find in the following section.

Acts XII. 18.

19

no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death.—

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2

We have now before us *the death of another martyr*, and that martyr *an apostle*, and that apostle no less a person than *James the brother of John*, who was also one of the chosen favourites and companions of our blessed Lord; and not the less dear because so early dismissed from mortal life and labour, and dismissed by a violent and bloody death. He was *slain with the sword*; but that blow, which was hardly if at all to be felt, in one short moment transported him to his long-loved Lord, and introduced him to that endeared converse with Jesus in his heavenly presence, of which all the most intimate hours spent with him upon earth, not excepting that of *the transfiguration* itself, (to which he was *an eye-witness*) were but an imperfect shadow.

3 But how strange was it, that *this* should *please the Jews!* To see the slaughter of one of the most excellent persons that ever adorned

[1] *What was become of Peter.*] Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 412. and Raphelius, (*ex Xen.* p. 160.) have so abundantly proved, that τι αρα ο Πετρος εγενετο may with great propriety be thus rendered, that I see no reason to imagine, as Erasmus here hints, that it may refer to some notion, that Peter had been *transformed*, perhaps by magic art, into some form or shape different from his own.

[m] *Ordered them to be led away to execution.*] It is well known, that the word απαχθηναι has this signification. See Beza and Hensius *in loc.*—He probably punished them with such severity, lest an apprehension of *a miraculous deliverance* should have prevailed, and so Christianity have gained, as it probably did, additional strength. What had so notoriously happened to all the *twelve apostles* in a circumstance much resembling this, (chap. v. 19, *& seq.*) would no doubt add great weight to such a representation; and it seems that this seasonable interposition of Providence, joined with the *death of Herod* soon after, put a speedy end to this persecution.

greatest benefactors, his Lord only excepted, that ever had appeared in all the list of the prophetic and inspired race! Yet thus it was that they proceeded to *fill up the measure of their fathers;* (Mat. xxiii. 32.) and such was still the hardness of their hearts, that after having *rejected the message*, they soon came to *hate the messengers*, and to *thirst for their blood:* The surest token of *wrath coming upon them to the uttermost;* as indeed it was but a few years more, and *such an execution* was done upon them, as seemed to be the accumulated vengeance due for *all the righteous blood* which had been shed from *Abel* to *James.* SECT. XXVI. Ver.

Peter was also *imprisoned*, and was *bound with chains:* And no doubt, *the prayers* and tears, with which *the church* were contending for his delivery, would appear exceedingly despicable to his enemies, if known by them; but they found to their confusion, that *his Redeemer was strong.* (Jer. l. 34.) The Lord Jesus sent *an angel to him;* who found him, secure in his innocence, and happy in his hope, *sleeping between* those *two guards*, who perhaps in a few hours were to have been his executioners; and sleeping so sweetly sound, that the brightness of the *angel's presence* did not immediately awake him. The *angel smites him*, and his *chains fall off;* the *iron gates are opened*, and the prisoner is set *at full liberty.* So does *the angel of death* smite as it were, but with a gentle blow, *the servants of Christ*, and the *fetters of mortality* fall off; the *doors of the dungeon* are opened, and they are led into *the New Jerusalem*, where they find another kind of *society*, another kind of *rest*, another kind of *joy*, than Peter knew even in the first transports of his deliverance. 5, 6 7—10

The *prayers of the night* were added to those of the day. Pious men and women, the aged and the young, were *assembled* on this important occasion: And while they were *praying*, God *answered; while they were yet speaking, He heard.* (Isa. lxv. 24.) Behold, Peter is himself sent among them, to bring them the astonishing news of that *real deliverance*, which at first appeared to him but as *a vision of the night.* What delight must *such a mercy* give them! especially when considered as *an answer of prayer!* What an encouragement must it be to them all, *to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering*, and in every future exigence *by prayer and supplication to make their requests known unto God.* (Phil. iv. 6.) Peter was solicitous, it might be *known* to the surviving James, and the other apostles, that they might *glorify God in him*, and might take encouragement from it, to *go on boldly* in the prosecution of their work. With such views should we own the goodness of God in any deliverance he grants us, that *others* may learn to confide in him, and may join their praises with ours. 12—16 9 17

Herod in his disappointment turns his rage on *the soldiers*, and makes 18, 19

SECT. XXVI. makes those unhappy men *the victims of his wrath.* Unhappy indeed, if they had not learnt from Peter whilst they had him in their power, *that lesson* which his charity would be so glad to teach them, in what he apprehended to be the last moments of his life; *to believe in Jesus for life and salvation.* But whatever *they suffered*, a much severer vengeance was reserved for Herod, on whom God quickly began to *visit* that innocent and pious *blood* which he had spilt, and *that too* after which he had thirsted; for in his sight he must have appeared *the murderer* of Peter, as well as of James.

SECT. XXVII.

Herod, on his reconciliation to the people of Tyre and Sidon, makes a public oration, for which he is extravagantly applauded; but for his pride on that applause is miraculously destroyed. Acts XII.—19,—24.

ACTS XII.—19.

SECT. XXVII. WE have just given an account of the miraculous manner in which Peter was delivered from the cruel attempt of Herod, and Acts XII. 19. of the transport of rage in which that tyrannical prince ordered the guards to be put to death, though in reality they had been no way accessary to his escape. *And* now after this disappointment, Herod departed from Jerusalem, and *passing from Judea to* the city of *Cæsarea*[a], *he abode* [*there;*] till in the midst of all his pride and glory, the judgment of God overtook him, and providence avenged the death of James, and the designed murder of Peter, in a most awful manner on this persecuting prince.

ACTS XII.—19.

AND he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and *there* abode.

20 *And* very observable were the circumstances of his miserable end, as introductory to which it must be observed, that *Herod was highly incensed against the Tyrians and Sidonians*, on account of some supposed affront which he had received from them, which provoked him so far, that having vowed a severe revenge, he was preparing

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with

[a] *Passing from Judea to Cæsarea.*] This is the same Cæsarea, which was formerly called *Straton's Tower*, and had been rebuilt by *Herod the Great.* (See note o on Acts viii. 40, p. 30.) Josephus (who gives us an account of the death of Herod Agrippa, which greatly illustrates this of St. Luke,) says, that he went to Cæsarea in the *third* year of his reign over the whole country, to celebrate games there in honour of Claudius Cæsar, to whom he had been so much obliged. (*Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 8. [al. 7,] § 2.) It seems, that *the oration* afterwards mentioned was made in a full *theatre* there.

[b] *Arrayed*

with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's *country*.

preparing with all speed to make war upon them: *But* as they were a trading people, and were apprehensive of the consequences of the king's displeasure, *they unanimously came* to a resolution to send proper representatives to Cæsarea, to appear *before him; and* having found out means of *gaining Blastus, the King's chamberlain, to* espouse *their interest*, and being introduced by him, *they begged for* an accommodation of the difference, and earnestly intreated he would grant them terms of *peace;* which they found it absolutely necessary to sue for, *because their country was nourished* and maintained *by that of the king;* they having little corn of their own growth, and not being able to subsist without a constant supply of provisions from Judea and Galilee. (Compare 1 Kings v. 11. and Ezek. xxvii. 17.)

SECT. XXVII. Acts XII. 20.

21 And upon a set day, Herod arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

And to make the transaction as solemn as possible, *upon a set day* which he thought proper for that purpose, when a grand assembly was held, *Herod* came forth with great magnificence and splendor, *arrayed in a royal habit*[b], *and being seated* in a public theatre *upon the throne, made an oration to them* with a great deal of state and affectation of eloquence; expressing at large his clemency and condescension in admitting them to favour, when he could so easily have subdued them by force. 21

22 And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man.

And the people, who flocked in multitudes to this grand spectacle, were so charmed with his appearance and address, that they all *cried out*, as in a rapture, as soon as he had done speaking, Surely [*it is*] *the voice of a god* that we hear, *and not* that *of a* mortal *man:* And the unhappy prince instead of expressing a just indignation at such base and impious flattery, hearkened to it with a secret complacency. 22

But

b *Arrayed in a royal habit.*] Josephus expressly says, that his fine robe was richly wrought with silver, which, reflecting the rays of the rising sun with an unusual and almost insupportable splendor, gave his flatterers an occasion of complimenting him with the title of *a deity.*—Mr. Fleming imagines, they therein referred to the glory with which the *shekinah* used to appear, and that Herod, being impious enough to assume the honour of it, provoked the divine Majesty beyond any farther sufferance, so that he sent a disease upon him, which rendered him equally contemptible and miserable. (*Flem. Christol.* Vol. II. p. 500.) Elsner has given several instances of the madness of *Heathen princes*, who arrogated *divinity* to themselves, and some of them came to *infamous ends.* (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 413, 414.) But to be sure, Herod's knowledge of the *true God*, and of his jealousy with respect to divine honours, rendered his guilt incomparably more aggravated than theirs.

SECT. XXVII.

Acts XII. 23.

But immediately all this haughty parade was disgraced and exposed; for *an angel of the Lord*, by an awful though invisible operation in his vitals, *smote him* with a sore and grievous disease[c], *because he gave not God the glory*, in rejecting these blasphemous applauses. On which he was presently forced to quit the place in extreme torture, *and being* miserably *eaten* and tormented (as his grandfather Herod the great had been,) *with* a vast number of small *worms*[d], which bred in his bowels, and rendered him a most nauseous and horrible spectacle to all about him, *he expired* in equal agony and infamy; sunk as much below the common state of human nature, as his flatterers had endeavoured to raise him above it.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

24 *And* upon this *the word of God grew* more and more successful, *and* in every place where the seed of the gospel was sown, the number of believers *was* considerably *multiplied*[e], and their faith greatly established: And after all the opposition of its enemies, who had endeavoured to extirpate it, the progress of christianity was apparently promoted by the concurrence of these extraordinary events, in the deliverance of Peter, and the death of Herod, that cruel persecutor, under such evident tokens of divine vengeance.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

IMPROVE-

[c] *An angel of the Lord smote him.*] Josephus tells us (in the place cited above,) "That, as he did not rebuke this impious flattery, he was immediately seized with exquisite and racking tortures in his bowels, so that he was compelled, before he left the place, to own his folly in admitting such acclamations, and upbraided those about him with the wretched condition in which they then saw *their God*; and, being carried out of the assembly to his palace, he expired in violent agonies the fifth day after he was taken, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign;" (reckoning from the time of his first advancement, by Caligula, to the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip;) being the fourth year of the emperor Claudius, *A. D.* 44.——Some have supposed, when it is said *an angel smote him*, that this is only *a Jewish phrase*, to signify he was *suddenly seized* with this disorder; But I think, it expresses *the real*, though invisible *agency* of a celestial spirit on this occasion, Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. 2 Kings xix. 35.

[d] *Being eaten with worms.*] Beza and Elsner think, σκωληκοβρωτος signifies in the general *consumed with vermin*, and may express the disease called *morbus pedicularis*, of which, as the latter of these critics has shewn, (Vol. I. p. 417, 418,) several persecuting and cruel princes have died. (Compare 2 Mac. ix. 9. and *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib.* viii. *cap.* 16.) I think with Dr. Lardner, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 1, § 6, Vol. I. p. 59, 60,) that Josephus out of a partial fondness for Herod Agrippa, whom he had so much extolled, has *concealed this particular*, which was the true cause of those excruciating pains in the bowels, of which *this Herod*, and his grandfather *Herod the Great* died. See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 6, [al. 8,] § 5.

[e] *The word of God grew, and was multiplied.*] The expressions here used, (ηυξανε και επληθυνετο,) relate properly to *vegetables*, and may be intended to signify, that *the growth of the gospel*, that is, its prevalency in the minds and lives of some, was (as it were) the means of *sowing that divine seed* in the hearts of many more.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE wrath of a king is as the messengers of death; but a wise man (says Solomon) *will pacify it:* (Prov. xvi. 14.) The world generally teaches this wisdom to its votaries, and the ties of *interest* are felt, when those of *affection* have but little force. *Tyre and Sidon were nourished by the king's country*, and therefore they *sought peace* with him: But how much more necessary is it, for all countries, and people, and princes, to *seek peace* with the *God of heaven*, by whom the earth and all its inhabitants *are nourished*, who *giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons*, and can by his sovereign word *turn the heavens into brass, and the earth into iron.* (Deut. xxviii. 23.) SECT. XXVII. Ver. 20

How vain and impious was *the applause* of this servile multitude, when they were so ready to compliment *a mortal man* in shining apparel, and on a royal throne, with the title of *divinity!* and how wretched *the infatuation* of his mind, when he could receive that ascription without horror, yea even with complacency! Thus do pomp and power, wealth and grandeur, take away the heart of their possessors; but never is a mortal *nearer to destruction* than when he forgets that he is *a mortal.* 21, 22

With pleasure no doubt, did this *angel of the Lord* come down to *execute* upon this proud and persecuting prince *the vengeance* due to the honours of God which he had invaded, and the blood of the saints which he had spilt. Let us adore *the triumph* of the injured majesty of heaven: He was *smitten with death*, with a death equally tormenting and ignominous; *vermin* devoured *this god*, nor could all his robes, his guards, or his physicians, preserve his living body from being as easy a prey to them, as the carcase of the meanest slave. 23

Thus is the Almighty Sovereign of the universe *known by the judgment which he executeth* upon the haughty kings of the earth. (Psal. ix. 16.) Well might *the gospel flourish* on occasion of such an event; when *this royal corpse* was (as it were) *given for manure* to the roots of *that vine* which he, in contempt of *the King of Kings* by whom it was planted, had impiously endeavoured to root up. 24

SECT.

SECT. XXVIII.

Paul and Barnabas, being returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, are sent out from thence to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; and, coming to Cyprus, smite Elymas with blindness, and convert Sergius Paulus the Roman governor there. Acts XII. ult. XIII. 1—12.

Acts XII. 25.

SECT. XXVIII.

Acts XII. 25.

WE have formerly taken notice of the message on which the disciples at Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem; to carry their alms to the brethren there, who were threatened with an approaching famine, which Agabus had foretold; (chap. xi. 29, 30. p. 74) *And* we shall now observe, that *Barnabas and Saul having fulfilled [their] ministry*, and faithfully performed the charge committed to them, *returned* back to Antioch *from Jerusalem* [a], *bringing along with them John, whose sirname was Mark* [b].

Acts XII. 25.

AND Barnabas and Saul, returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose sirname was Mark.

Now

a *Having fulfilled their ministry, returned from Jerusalem.*] Mr. Fleming thinks with several other good critics, that they *returned* after the death of James, and in the interval between the commitment and deliverance of Peter; and that it was to avoid breaking the thread of the story, that their return was not mentioned sooner. (See *Flem. Christol.* Vol. II. p. 250.) But Dr. Lardner argues, from its being inserted here, that the commission was not executed till *after the death of Herod*, and dates the beginning of the famine accordingly. (*Credib.* Book I. chap. ii. § 2. Vol. I. p. 541.) Lord Barrington thinks, it was during Paul's abode at Jerusalem on this occasion, that he had *the vision in the temple* mentioned Acts xxii. 17—21; and that then *the Lord Jesus* gave him that commission to the Gentiles expressed Acts xxvi. 17, 18. which words he supposes to have been spoken *at this time*, and that this extraordinary fact is referred to Acts xiii. 2. when *the Spirit* speaks as *having* already *called him and Barnabas* to the work, to which they were then to be separated; which must suppose, that Barnabas had also some correspondent *vision*, or was mentioned in that of Paul. (See *Miscell. Sacr.* Essay ii. p. 26, 27.) But I shall give my reasons, when I come to the *texts in question*, why I understand them in a different sense and connection.

b *John, whose sirname was Mark.*] It appears from what Grotius has urged, (*Proleg. ad Marc. Evang.*) that this was a different person from *Mark the Evangelist*, who was for several years the intimate companion of the apostle Peter, and seems to have been converted by him, as he calls him *his son*, (1 Pet. v. 13.) a title, which the *apostles* used to give to those who were the fruit of their ministry. (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 15. Gal. iv. 19. and Philem. ver. 10.) We learn from Scripture, that this person was *the son of Mary*, at whose house the disciples met, to pray for Peter, when he was imprisoned; (Acts xii. 12.) and he is spoken of as *sister's son to Barnabas*, (Col. iv. 10.) who appears to have had a great affection for him, not only by his taking him with them to Antioch, and from thence to Pamphylia, (Acts xii. 5, *& seq.*) where it should seem he was discouraged by the difficulties of the work from going any farther, and returned to Jerusalem, (ver. 13.) but by his insisting afterwards, when they were setting out upon another progress, that Mark should go with them to visit the churches, which Paul was so averse to, that they parted; and Paul chose Silas to attend him, while Barnabas took Mark, and sailed for Cyprus.—(Acts xv. 37—40.) We have no farther account of him in the Acts; but he appears

Acts XIII. 1. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers of great note [c], *particularly Barnabas*, the generous Levite whom we just now mentioned, who had given up the whole of his estate to charitable uses; *and Simeon, who was* also *called Niger*, or the Black, from his swarthy complexion; *and Lucius, the Cyrenian*, a native of Africa; *and Manaen*, a person of considerable rank, *who was educated with Herod the tetrarch* in his father's court [d], yet thought it no disgrace to appear as a Christian minister; *and*, to mention no more, *Saul*, that remarkable convert, whose labours in the church were, as we shall farther learn, so eminently useful.

2 As they ministred to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.

And as they were ministring to the Lord in public, *and* joined *fasting* to prayer, *the Holy Spirit* by immediate revelation *said, Separate to me Barnabas and Saul, for the* extraordinary *work* of preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles, *to which I have* now expressly *called them* [e].

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent *them* away.

And having on this notice appointed a solemn day for this purpose, in which they *fasted and prayed, and laid their hands upon them*, in token of their designation to that extraordinary office, *they*

pears so far to have retrieved his character, that he is *recommended* afterwards by the apostle Paul to the Colossians; (Col. iv. 10.) and, when he was at Rome, the apostle mentions him among *his fellow-labourers*, (Philem. ver. 24.) and at last speaks of his desire to see him, as one that *was useful to him in the ministry*. (2 Tim. iv. 11.)

[c] *Certain prophets and teachers.*] Who of these might be the *stated pastors* of the place, and who only *occasional residents* there, we cannot I think with any certainty determine, only that Paul and Barnabas were of the latter.—Mr. Fleming, on the supposition mentioned in *note* [a], concludes that *this assembly* might be held with some peculiar regard to Peter's danger, and that in it *the Spirit* directed, that both Paul and Barnabas should be received into the now diminished number of the *apostles*. See *Flem. Christol.* Vol. II. p. 250.

[d] *Manaen, who was educated with Herod the tetrarch.*] He seems by this to have been a person of considerable rank, and, having been *a courtier*, might probably have learnt some peculiar arts of address; yet he had no share in this extraordinary commission granted to Paul and Barnabas. (Compare 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.) Josephus (*Antiq. lib. xv. cap.* 10. [al 13.] § 5,) mentions one Manaem an *Essene*, who had foretold *Herod the Great*, while he was yet a boy, that he should be a king, and was afterwards in high favour with him; and some have thought, this was *his son*. (See *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 11. p. 79—81.) That Manaen, Simeon, and Lucius, were all *apostles*, is a strange opinion of Dr. Scot, (*Christian Life*, Vol. III p. 1099.) which so judicious a man could never have entertained, had it not seemed necessary to solve a difficulty, which I hope we shall presently see is only imaginary.

[e] *For the work to which I have called them.*] If there be any reference to *a past fact* in these words, it is probably to *some revelation* personally made to Paul and Barnabas, to signify that they should take a journey into several countries of Asia Minor to preach the gospel there. But that they were now invested with the *apostolic office* by these *inferior ministers*, (though expressly asserted by Clarius and many others,) is a thing neither credible in itself, nor consistent with what Paul himself says, Gal. i. 1. And that they now received *a power*, before *unknown* in the church, of preaching to the *idolatrous Gentiles*, is inconsistent with Acts xi. 20, 21, and upon many other considerations, to be proposed elsewhere, appears to me absolutely incredible.

SECT. XXVIII. *they dismissed them* from Antioch with all the most affectionate tokens of Christian friendship.

Acts XIII. 4. *They therefore being* thus *sent out by* the immediate direction of *the Holy Spirit* [f], and animated to a noble elevation of soul in the thought of such an important mission, *departed to Seleucia*, a considerable port in the Mediterranean sea; *and from thence they sailed to* the island of *Cyprus*; so celebrated, or rather so infamous, for the worship of Venus, who was supposed to hold her peculiar residence here, and therefore was commonly called "the Cyprian Goddess." *And being arrived at Salamis*, the eastern port of the island, and consequently that which lay nearest to the place from whence they came, *they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews* there; for there were great numbers of that people in Cyprus: *And they had also John for their attendant*, who waited upon them with great respect, not pretending to a character by any means equal to theirs.

6 *And having traversed the* whole *island, as far as Paphos*, which lay on its western coast, *they found* there *a certain Jew*, who was *a magician* [*and*] *false prophet* [g], *whose name was Bar-Jesus*, 7 or the son of one Jesus or Joshua: This was a person *who* was much regarded, and *was* at that time *with the* Roman *proconsul* there, *Sergius Paulus, a prudent man*, of a steady conduct and thoughtful temper, ready to inquire after truth, and capable to judge of its evidence; *who* having received some general intelligence of their character and messages, sent some of those that were about him, and *calling for Barnabas and Saul, desired to hear the word of God*, that he might know what was the purport of their preaching, and what regard was due to the doctrine they

4 So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Barjesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

[f] *By the Holy Spirit.*] This seems to be added to remind us, that, though they were solemnly recommended to God by the *prayers* of *their brethren*, their authority was not derived *from them*, but from *the Holy Spirit* himself.

[g] *A magician and false prophet.*] There were many instances of real or pretended *sorcery* among the Jews in these days, which seems to have been designed by the devil and wicked men, to slur the miracles of *Christ* and *his apostles*. But, by confounding them in several instances, the *Christian cause* was magnified yet more, than it would otherwise have been. Nevertheless it is to be feared, they wrought on many who were not wise and candid enough to examine, so as to introduce *a general contempt* of all pretences to *supernatural powers* as false or inconclusive: a sad instance of which we have even in Marcus Antoninus, who, though he professes *some revelations* to have been made to himself *in dreams*, (*De Rebus suis, lib.* i. § 17) yet reckons it among the great advantages he received by conversing with Diogenetus, that he learnt from him to despise all stories of *miracles* and *dispossessions, ibid.* § 6.

h *That*

Acts XIII. 8.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

they taught. *But Elymas*, or *the magician*, *(for that was* the meaning of *his name* Elymas, *when translated* into the Greek language [h]) as he was sensible that he should be no more regarded if their doctrine was received, set himself all he could to hinder the effect of it, and *withstood them* in their preaching, *endeavouring* in a crafty way, by a variety of false insinuations which he used, *to turn away the proconsul from* embracing *the faith* [i].

9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him:

Then Saul, (who is also [called] Paul [k], and will generally be spoken of hereafter by that name, by which the Romans and Greeks would most naturally mention him.) *being filled with* the powerful effusion and impulse of *the Holy Spirit*, turning to Elymas the sorcerer, *and looking stedfastly upon him, said*, with just indignation, *O thou* wretch [*who art*] *full of all* 9 10 *deceit and of all wickedness! Thou* notorious *son of the devil*, that great deceiver, the adversary both of God and man! *Thou enemy of all righteousness! wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord*, and by thy perverse misrepresentations to lay a stumbling-block before those that would embrace the gospel? Thou shalt be confounded in this cursed undertaking, and made a signal monument of the divine displeasure.

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

h *That was his name when translated*, &c.] The most probable *etymology* I have found of it is that, which derives it from the Arabic word *Alim*, which signifies *one acquainted with hidden secrets*, from the Hebrew עָלַם, *olam, to hide*, and is used in the *Arabic Version* of the *Old Testament* for the Hebrew חַרְטֹם, *a magician*. See *Beza in loc.*

i *The proconsul.*] So the word ἀνθύπατος properly signifies; and, though Beza and Dr. Hammond, as well as Grotius and Mr. L'Enfant, (who has taken almost *all his notes* from him,) say that the title was *improperly* applied to the governor of Cyprus, as they suppose, by way of compliment, while he was only ἀντιστράτηγος, *a sort of lieutenant*; Dr. Lardner has with great learning vindicated *the accuracy* with which St. Luke speaks, *(Credib.* Book I. chap. i. § 11, Vol. I. p. 51—54,) and shewn, from Dio, *lib.* liii. p. 504. *A. & lib.* liv. p. 525. *B.)* that they who presided over the *Roman provinces* by the appointment of the *senate*, (and Cyprus was now of that number, though it had once been *prætorian*,) were called *proconsuls* though they had never filled the *consular chair*; which (as appears by the *Fasti Consulares*,) was the case with the excellent and happy governor of whom we speak. *See Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 1, p. 55, 56.

k *Saul, who is also called Paul.*] Some have thought *the apostle* had originally *two names*, and many others that he changed the former for the latter with design, either out of deference to Sergius Paulus, or to the Gentiles, among whom he now preached, so much as to be called by way of eminence, (though not in strictly appropriation,) *their apostle*. (See *Dr. Hammond in loc.*) But I think Beza's account of the matter most easy and probable; that having conversed hitherto chiefly with Jews and Syrians, to whom the name of *Saul* was familiar, and now coming among Romans and Greeks, they would naturally pronounce his name *Paul*; as one, whose Hebrew name was *Jochanan*, would be called by the Greeks and Latins *Johannes*, by the French *Jean*, by the Dutch *Hans*, and by the English *John*. (See also *Grot. in loc.*) Beza thinks, the family of this *proconsul* might be the first, who addressed or spoke of him by the name *Paul*.

l *The*

SECT. XXVIII.

pleasure. *And behold*, even *now the* almighty *hand of the Lord* Jesus Christ, whose gospel thou opposest, *is upon thee, and thou shalt be* struck *blind* by it, *and* shalt *not* be able to *see* even *the sun* itself at noon day *for a* certain *time*, that thou mayest be convinced of thy sin and folly, and mayest, if possible, be brought to repentance for it. *And immediately*, while Paul was yet speaking *a* thick *mist and darkness fell upon him: and going about* in the utmost confusion, *he sought some to lead him by the hand*, not being able so much as to find the door without a guide, and afraid that he might run upon any one who stood in his way.

Acts XIII. 11.

11 And now behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 *Then the proconsul, seeing what was done*, yielded to so convincing an evidence, and *believed* the gospel[1]; *being* also *struck with* admiration of the internal evidence which he soon discovered in *the doctrine of the Lord*; and which broke in with increasing lustre on his mind, in proportion to the degree of attention with which he inquired into it.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

2 WE who were once *sinners of the Gentiles*, and now by the divine goodness are brought to the knowledge of the gospel, have abundant reason to be thankful that *inspired messengers* were sent to teach it, being *separated* to that purpose by the di-
4 rect appointment of *the Holy Spirit*. May they that go out to this sacred work in all nations, and in all times, maintain a becoming regard to his influences; and may he *make their way prosperous!* That he may be engaged to do so, it is certainly convenient, upon
3 the justest principles of reason and piety, to *send them forth with solemn prayer*; in which ministers and private Christians should from time to time concur, with an intenseness and seriousness answerable to the occasion.

Wherever

1 *The proconsul believed.*] I can see no reason at all to imagine, with Lord Barrington, (*Abstract*, p. 21) and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 27) that Sergius Paulus was the *first convert* to Christianity among the *idolatrous Gentiles*, which, if their own interpretation of Acts xi. 19, 20, (unsatisfactory as it seems,) were to be allowed, would appear incredible from this very context; for who can imagine, that Paul and Barnabas should, as we are assured they did, *traverse the whole Island* of Cyprus, from Salamis to Paphos, without converting one person from *idolatry*, though it is here uncontroverted, that they bore an unlimited commission, and fully understood its extent?——Limborch justly argues in favour of *Christian magistracy* from hence, as it is neither credible, that, if Sergius Paulus abdicated his office, so important a circumstance should be omitted, or that Paul should have acquiesced in his continuing in it, if he knew it *contrary to the will of Christ*, which he would not fail fully to declare to him. See *Limb. Theolog. lib.* v. *cap.* 73, § 5.

Wherever the messengers of the gospel go, they must not be surprised if Satan raise up *his instruments* and *children* to oppose them; especially where they would endeavour to introduce religion into the hearts of *princes*, or other *great men*. Well does *the prince of the power of the air* know, how dangerous every such blow is to his kingdom. Nevertheless, *the King of Kings* knows how to make way to the hearts of *the greatest* among the children of men; nor can any of them shew a more solid and important *prudence*, than to inquire impartially into the evidences of the gospel, and to give themselves up to be governed by it; an happy resolution, which they will probably be disposed to form, in proportion to the degree in which they observe its nature and tendency: For surely every intelligent person that does so must, like Sergius Paulus, be *struck with the doctrine of the Lord*, as well as with *the miracles* which were wrought to confirm it.

SECT. XXVIII. Ver. 6, 8, 7, 12

Justly might Paul pronounce that man, who endeavoured to obstruct the progress of divine truth in the world, *a child of Satan*, and *an enemy of all righteousness:* Justly might God, who knew all his secret wickedness and perverseness of soul, *smite him with a blindness*, which, while it rendered him incapable of seeing the light of the meridian *sun*, seemed but a doleful emblem of that *more fatal darkness* which, through the corruption of his heart, had spread itself over his mind, and prevented *the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, from shining upon it.* (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Have we not reason to fear, that God may in his righteous judgment punish that *iniquity of Spirit*, with which many now rise up against *the right ways of the Lord*, (not ceasing to *pervert* and disguise them, that they may more plausibly and effectually oppose them, with an *internal blindness*, in which they may *wander on* to their destruction? And if *others* stupidly permit themselves to be *guided by them*, what can be expected but that *the blind leading the blind, both* leaders and followers should *fall into the pit?* (Mat. xv. 14.)

9, 10

11

SECT. XXIX.

Paul and Barnabas come to Antioch in Pisidia, where the former delivers a remarkable discourse in the Jewish synagogue. Acts XIII. 13—42.

Acts XIII. 13.

NOW when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia

Acts XIII. 13.

THE reader was informed, in the last section, of the success with which Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Cyprus; were Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, was converted

SECT. XXIX. Acts XIII. 13.

SECT. XXIX.

Acts XIII. 13.

verted to it; *and* we are now to add, that *loosing from Paphos, they* and their companions, *who were* desirous to spend some longer time *with Paul*, that they might be more fully instructed in the Christian faith, *came to Perga*, a town *in Pamphylia*, a province of the Lesser Asia, which lay east of Cilicia to which it was contiguous, and on the northern coast of the Mediterranean sea. *But John*, sirnamed Mark, perceiving they intended a long tour in those parts, and that they were like to meet with much opposition among the idolatrous Gentiles, to whom they were carrying the gospel, could not by all the warmest remonstrances of Paul and his own uncle Barnabas, be persuaded to share their labours and dangers in so excellent a cause; but taking the opportunity of a vessel which he found in that port bound for Palestine, he *withdrew himself from them and returned to Jerusalem*.

phylia and John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

14 *Nevertheless they* remained inflexible in their resolution of prosecuting the important work in which they were engaged; and therefore *going on from Perga*, they *came to Antioch*,[a] a considerable city *in* the district of *Pisidia*, which lay north of Pamphylia, and consequently farther from the sea: *And entering into the* Jewish *synagogue on the sabbath-day, they sat down*[b] among 15 those that were worshipping there. *And after the* customary *reading* of the proper section for the day out *of the law, and* another out of *the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue*, knowing in general the public character which the two celebrated strangers sustained, and being curious to hear from their own mouth that new doctrine which had made so much noise in other places, *sent* one of the inferior officers *to them*[c], *saying*,

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down.

15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

[a] *Antioch in Pisidia.*] The situation of this place is thus described, to intimate how carefully it should be distinguished from *Antioch in Syria*, so much more frequently mentioned in this history.

[b] *Entering into the synagogue, they sat down.*] The professed followers of Jesus were *excommunicated*, at least on conviction, by an act of the *Sanhedrim* made before the crucifixion of *our Lord*; (compare John ix. 22; and xii. 42;) and it is what he had foretold to *his apostles*, that they should be so treated. (John xvi. 2.) Yet Paul and Barnabas enter the synagogue without opposition, and meet with a regard which none can imagine the Jews would shew to *excommunicated persons*. Learned men have accounted for this by saying, that *elders* and *doctors* among the Jews, (such as Paul and Barnabas are supposed to have been,) though sometimes *scourged in the synagogues*, were not *cast out of them*.

[c] *The rulers of the synagogue sent to them.*] It is, I think, a very fruitless attempt, which some learned men have made, to ascertain *the conditions* on which persons were *admitted to teach* in the *Jewish synagogues*; and to settle *the forms* with which they

SECT. XXIX.

Acts XIII. 15.

saying, Men [and] brethren, if you have any word of exhortation to the people, or any declaration to make which may conduce to the edification of the assembly, *speak [it]* freely, as this is the proper season of doing it.

15 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience:

Then Paul stood up, and waving his hand, to render the audience more attentive, *said, Ye men of Israel, and* all *ye that fear God,* and are met together with devout hearts to worship him this day, *hearken*[d], I beseech you, with patient attention, for I shall mention several facts which well deserve your serious regard. *The God of this* peculiar *people,* for such I well know the seed *of Israel* to be, graciously *chose our* pious and venerable *fathers,* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to be the objects of his special favour, and for their sakes was pleased to promise most important blessings to their offspring: Accordingly he took them under his protection from their first beginning, *and raised the people* from that prostrate and dejected state in which they were *while sojourning in the land of Egypt,* under the tyranny of Pharaoh[e]; *and* to deliver them from that inhospitable and oppressive country, he *led them out of it with an uplifted* and extended *arm,* having displayed his power in a variety of most astonishing miracles, by which he

16

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

17

they were entered on that office. It has been supposed, that Paul and Barnabas had gone through *these forms* and that their *sitting down* in the seats appropriated to the *doctors* or *teachers* led these *rulers,* though strangers to them, to send them *this permission.* But it seems evident from *Maimonides* and the *Talmud,* that after public worship was over, *any one* might make a speech to the people in the synagogue, on any subject which he apprehended might be for their advantage. Yet it would be a circumstance of *decency,* which the good sense and breeding of Paul and Barnabas would lead them to regard, that *the rulers* should be *made acquainted* with their desire of doing it; probably by some message or interview before the devotions began, to which *this permission* of theirs might refer. See *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 2, p. 271, 272.

d All *ye that fear God, hearken.*] This discourse seems chiefly intended to illustrate the divine œconomy in *opening the gospel gradually,* and preparing the Jews, by temporal mercies, for others of a yet more important nature. The *apostle,* in consequence of this, had a very handsome and unaffected opportunity of shewing his acquaintance with their *Scriptures,* which it is well known they esteemed as the highest part of literature, and object of science.—The expression, *ye that fear God,* is ambiguous, and would best suit those, that had, by embracing the Jewish religion, entered into covenant with the true God; yet so as not to exclude any others, in whom a filial reverence for the divine Being was a governing principle.

e *Raised the people, while sojourning in the land of Egypt.*] Beza and Mr. L'Enfant explain this, as referring to *the honour* the Israelites were in during the ministry of Joseph in Egypt; but Elsner *(Observ.* Vol. I p. 418, 419,) has shewn, that the word ὑψωσεν often signifies *to deliver,* or *raise out of a calamitous state.* (Compare Psal. ix. 13. xviii. 48. cxiii. 7. *Septuag.)* And, as Joseph prudently declined any attempt to make his brethren *courtiers,* and kept them in the country under the character of *shepherds,* (a profession which the Egyptians held contemptible rather than honourable (Gen. xlvi. 34,) I think it by far more natural to interpret the passage as in the *paraphrase.*

f *Endured*

SECT. XXIX.

Acts XIII. 18.

he pleaded their injured cause. *And* then *for the space of about forty years, he endured their* perverse and ungrateful *behaviour*[f] *in the wilderness*, carrying them (as it were) through a course of education there, to form them in those retired circumstances to a habit of observing that admirable system of laws which he

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 there thought fit to give them. At length he put a period to that pilgrimage, in which, nevertheless, they had been sustained by so many miraculous tokens of his care; *and having cast out seven* mighty *nations*[g], who were before settled *in the land of Canaan*, and had erected more than thirty kingdoms there, defended by fortifications of great strength as well as by numerous forces both of horse and foot, *he distributed their* whole *country to them for an inheritance*, and supported them in it for many generations.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 *And*, to omit many remarkable circumstances in this period of their history, *after these transactions*, [*which lasted*] *about four hundred and fifty years*[h], that is, after the choice of our fathers,

20 And after that, he gave *unto them* judges, about the space of

f *Endured their behaviour.*] This is the proper import of the word ἐτροποφόρησεν, and it was very fit to give this oblique intimation of that *perverseness* and *ingratitude*, which so early began to prevail amongst them. The *Syriac* renders it by a word, which signifies *to nourish* or *educate*, so that Beza conjectures they read ἐτροφοφόρησεν; and it suggests so beautiful a view of the conduct of Providence towards them in this respect, that I could not forbear inserting the thought, though I prefer the common and almost universally received reading. Yet I find Dr. Hammond thinks the other was probably authentic, and observes that the expression of *nursing them*, (for so he understands it,) is beautifully connected with that of *taking them up* when they lay like *an exposed infant*. Compare Deut. i. 31. and Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 8.

g *Cast out seven nations.*] Namely, the *Hittites*, *Girgashites*, *Amorites*, *Canaanites*, *Perizzites*, *Hivites*, and *Jebusites*. Deut. vii. 1. Josh. iii. 10. xxiv. 11.

h *After these transactions* [*which lasted*] *about four hundred and fifty years.*] The course of the sacred history will by no means permit us to imagine, that *the judges* in their succession continued 450 *years* after the settlement of Israel in Canaan; since we learn from 1 Kings vi. 1, that Solomon began to build the temple in the 480th year after they came out of Egypt. It is certain therefore, that, if we make no alteration in the reading *here*, or in the *Old Testament*, the words must be *so pointed*, as to justify my inserting in the *version* those words [*which lasted,*] in which I follow Mr. L'Enfant, and the *translation* of 1727. In that case I think, the time must be computed from the birth of Isaac, on the principles which Mr. Lampe has laid down, in his excellent *Compendium* of *Eccles. Hist. lib.* i. *cap.* 5, § 1—7. Yet I own, that Dr. Whitby has the authority of many great names, ancient and modern, to justify him in following the chronology of Josephus, who places the building of the temple in the *five-hundred ninety-second year* after Israel's going out of Egypt, [*Antiq. lib.* viii. *cap.* 3, [al. 2,] § 1.] which would admit of allowing *three hundred thirty-nine years* for the administration of the *judges*, and *one hundred and eleven* for the years of the several *tyrannical oppressions*, in all *four hundred and fifty years*, reserving forty for Samuel and Saul together, forty for David, and four for Solomon, in whose *fifth year* the temple was begun; and the coincidence of the numbers in the book of Judges, as illustrated by Dr. Lightfoot, (*Hor. Hebr. in loc.*) and Mr. Biscoe, (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. xx. p. 666, 667,) is very remarkable. But I was cautious of *paraphrasing this text* in a manner which must allow an important error in our *Hebrew copies*, and affect the whole system of the sacred chronology.

1 Sa

of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

fathers, and the birth of Isaac, in which the promises to Abraham began to be accomplished, *He gave* [*them*] a series of *judges;* by whose heroic interposition he delivered them from those repeated oppressions and miseries which their frequent revolts to idolatry had brought upon them. And this continued, with some intervals, *till* the time of *Samuel the prophet*, who was the last of these extraordinary leaders and magistrates. SECT. XXIX. Acts XIII. 20.

21 And afterward they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

And from that time, too fond of being like their neighbours in that respect, *they desired a king*, (1 Sam. viii. 5.) insensible of the favour which God had done them in assuming the character and relation of a king to them: *And God gave them*, first, *Saul the Son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin*; and his government with that of Samuel the prophet lasted *for the* 21

22 And when he had *term of forty years*[i]. *And having* in his righteous 22

[i] *For the term of forty years.*] It is the opinion of Beza, Grotius, Calvin, Brennius, Woltzogenius, Limborch, (*Amic. Collat cap.* 26,) and several other considerable *critics*, that the *forty years* here spoken of do not *all* belong to the reign of Saul, but include at least a considerable part of Samuel's government. Dr. Benson has also more lately declared himself on the same side of the question; (*Hist. of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 31,) and Messieurs L'Enfant and Beausobre gives us the same interpretation. But the learned Mr. Biscoe has advanced so much in favour of the supposition, that the reign of Saul continued all these *forty years*, (*Serm. at Boyle's Lect.* chap. xvii. p. 612—616,) which Mr. Bedford also maintains in his *chronology*, that I think it incumbent upon me to give some better reason, than merely the authority of the greatest names, for paraphrasing the clause as I have done, especially as most of the *authors* mentioned above have only given their opinion, and none of them has entered fully into the question. The chief consideration which determined me is this: Samuel is expressly said to have *judged Israel all the days of his life*; (2 Sam. vii. 15,) but we are sure, that he *lived* the greater part, (probably *by far the greater part,*) of the *forty years* preceding Saul's death; for David was but *thirty years old, when he began to reign over Judah*, (2 Sam. v. 4,) which was not till after Saul was slain; and Samuel did not only *anoint him*, (at which time we cannot suppose David to have been less than *fifteen years old*,) but lived a considerable time after, that is, till about the time of David's going to Paran; (1 Sam. xxv. 1.) which seems to have been but a little before his sojourning in the country of the Philistines, where he dwelt only *a year and four months* before the battle of Gilboa, in which Saul fell; (1 Sam. xxvii. 7.) a circumstance that greatly favours the opinion, which (as Drusius observes,) so commonly prevailed among the Jews, that *Saul survived Samuel* but little more than *two years*. I am indeed far from thinking that Saul's reign is to be reckoned only from *Samuel's death*: the contrary is most apparent; and Mr. Biscoe has abundantly proved, that the actions assigned to him must have taken up *many years*. But of the *forty* in question, it may well suffice to allow *twenty* to him from his anointing, and the former *twenty* (computed from the grand action at Mizpeh,) to Samuel, who might in that time be *past his prime*, and so be inclined to associate *his sons* with him, till on their miscarriages the people took occasion to demand *a king*, who at first, we are sure from the story, lived privately, and whose authority was never so great as to swallow up that of so illustrious a prophet and judge.—I know, the authority of Josephus is urged in defence of the scheme I oppose; for he says, according to our *present copies*, that Saul reigned "*eighteen years* during Samuel's life," which I think very probable, "and *two and twenty* after his death." (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* vi. *cap.* 14. [al. 15,] § 9.) But this is utterly incredible; for David then could not be *eight years old*, when Samuel anointed him, which (as was said before) was some considerable time before the prophet died; and it may therefore be assured-

ly

SECT. XXIX.

teous displeasure rejected Saul, and *removed him* from reigning over Israel, for his rebellion against the divine command in the business of Amalek, and for other crimes of aggravated guilt, (1 Sam. xv. 23. and 1 Chron. x. 13) *He* afterwards *raised up to them David for a king*, the person so justly celebrated in all succeeding ages; *to whom also he gave* a more glorious *testimony* in his word, (1 Sam. xiii. 14. and Psal. lxxxix. 20.) *and said*, "*I have found* my servant *David the son of Jesse, a man according to mine own heart, who* will not disregard my voice as Saul has done, but *shall do all my will*, and rule my people with integrity."

Acts XIII. 22.

had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 From him, it was declared, that the Messiah should descend, and by a special covenant he was assured, that his throne should be established to all generations. (Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4.) Now therefore *of this* holy *man's seed, according to the* tenor of that frequently repeated *promise*, (Isai. ix. 6, 7. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6) *God hath raised up unto Israel Jesus, the* great and illustrious *Saviour*, so long foretold in the sacred oracles, whom I am this day come to preach among you.

23 Of this man's seed hath God, according to *his* promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24 This is the person God had so often promised he would send into the world, and he appeared just in the time, and with the circumstances, which those divine prophecies had pointed out; *John* the Baptist *having* been sent *before* as his herald, and having *preached* in a very convincing manner, *to introduce his appearance, the baptism of repentance unto all the people of Israel;* [k] even that baptism which, in token of their repentance,

24 When John had first preached before his coming, the baptism of repentance unto all the people of Israel.

ly concluded, (as Dr. Hudson intimates,) that the true reading is that of Epiphanius, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Eutychius, which leaves out *και εικοσι, and twenty*, so as to assign him but *two years* after the prophet's death, which agrees very well with our interpretation.—The argument of Mr. Biscoe's scheme, taken from Ishbosheth's being *forty years old* at the time of his father's death, (2 Sam. ii. 10,) would indeed be of great weight, if the sacred historian had any where told us, that Saul was *very young* when anointed by Samuel; but the word בחור, which is used on the first mention of him, (1 Sam. ix. 2,) though rendered by our translators *a choice young man*, has not necessarily that import. The *Seventy* have often rendered it ἐνγαλος, εκλεκτος, πολεμιστης, *strong choice, warlike*, and here ευμεγεθης, *of a stately presence*; and I think it would be easy to shew, that in many places where they render it γεναικος, (as indeed they frequently do,) it only signifies *a person in the full vigour of his constitution*. It seems by no means probable, that God should choose *a stripling* for the *first king* of Israel; and I think what is said of the age of Ishbosheth, compared with the passages mentioned above plainly shews, that Saul was then *in his prime*, (perhaps about *thirty-five*,) and justifies the prudence of Pagnin, Montanus, Munster, and *the Vulgate*, who render it *electus, a choice person*, without determining any thing concerning *his youth*, in which they also agree with the *Syriac* and *Arabic Versions*.

k *John having before preached*, &c.] He mentions the preaching of *John the Baptist* in this incidental manner, as a thing already known to them, because it gave so universal an alarm to the whole Jewish nations,

repentance, they were commanded by God to receive; thereby to signify, on the one hand, their desire to purify themselves from all their pollutions, and on the other, to testify God's readiness to forgive them, and admit them into his favour. *And when John was* just *fulfilling his course, he said, Whom do you imagine me to be? I am not* [*he,*] nor do I at all pretend to be the promised Messiah [l]: *But behold there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose,* nor to perform the lowest office of menial service to him. (Compare John i. 20, 27.)

ACT. XXIX. Acts XIII. 24.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*, But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

And let me assure you, *men* [*and*] *brethren* even all you who are *children of the family of Abraham, and* all *those among you that* truly *fear God* and serve him, of whatever family or nation you may be descended, let me (I say) solemnly assure you, that these things are your great and immediate concern: For *unto you,* though providentially cast at some distance from the time and place in which this message of John was first delivered, and in which Jesus at first appeared, yet unto you *is the word of this* great and important *salvation sent. For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and their rulers, not knowing* this illustrious person, though God bore such a convincing testimony to *him, and* being also ignorant of what was signified by *the sayings of the prophets, which are read every sabbath-day* among them (as they have this day been among you, *have* unwittingly *fulfilled* [*them*] *in condemning him. And though they could find no* sufficient *cause of death* [*in him,*] nor indeed any thing in his whole conduct capable of any degree of blame, *yet* nevertheless *they requested Pilate* with the utmost importunity, *that he might be* condemned and *executed. And when they had* inadvertently *accomplished all things that were written concerning him,* in such a circumstantial detail of particulars as is truly astonishing, *taking him down from*

25 26 27 28 29

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him.*

28 And though they found no cause of death *in him,* yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from

nation, that it might probably be heard of in foreign countries, at least as remote as Pisidia.

l *Whom do you imagine me to be? I am not he.*] Raphelius has taken pains to prove from some similar passages in the *Greek classics* that both these clauses may be considered as united in an *affirmation,* and rendered, "I am not the person whom you suppose me to be;" that is, *the Messiah. Annot. ex. Herod,* p. 251, 252.

m *Taking*

SECT. XXIX.

from the cross [m], on which he had expired in the midst of ignominy and torture, *they* permitted his friends to bury him, and *laid him in a tomb*. And there they took the utmost care to guard him; *but God raised him up from the dead* on the third day, according to his own repeated prediction, which they had heard from him before, but were unable to obstruct and hinder its accomplishment. *And* after he was risen from the dead, *he appeared for several days to those that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem* a little before his death; *who* most of them continue to this day, and *are his witnesses to the people* of the Jews, among whom they still reside, and where any of you who go up to Jerusalem may hear it from their own mouth. *And we*, who are sent out by him on the same errand, and furnished with all proper credentials for that purpose, do now *bring you* these *good tidings, that the very promise which was made to the fathers*, and which was the hope and joy of their posterity through so many succeeding ages. *God hath* now *accomplished to us their children, in raising up Jesus* from the dead. And it is manifest, that by his resurrection he has declared him, in the most convincing manner, to be indeed his Son; so that it was, as I may speak, the birth-day of his reign, *as it is also written in* the seventh verse of *the second Psalm* [n], "*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee* [o]." *And* agreeable to this, *because he hath raised him from the dead, no more to return to* the grave, the seat of *corruption* [p], *He*

Acts XIII. 30.

31

32

33

34

from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this

[m] *Taking him down from the cross.*] The *apostle* was far from being ashamed to mention the most ignominious parts of *his Master's sufferings* to those who were strangers to the gospel; knowing how sufficiently he answered all that could be objected from thence by what he added and testified concerning *his resurrection*.

[n] *In the second Psalm.*] A few copies read it, (as Jerom Augustine also did,) the first; but they are overborne by such superior authority, that I am surprised they should have been followed by any, who did not affect to vary from the received readings as much as possible.——It seems evident from hence, that the Psalms were then placed *in the same order* as now; and it is observable, that this is the only quotation of the *Old Testament* so circumstantially made in *the New*.——Beza conjectures, that neither *first* nor *second* was mentioned in the original copy.

[o] *This day have I begotten thee.*] Bishop Pearson, (on *the Creed*, p. 252.) well observes, that it is with peculiar propriety and beauty that God is said to have *begotten Christ* on the day of *his resurrection*, as he seemed then to be *born out of the earth anew*. (Compare Rom. i. 4. Heb. i. 6. and Rev. i. 5.) Mr. L'Enfant says, that the anointing day of kings is sometimes called *their birth-day*, for which Heinsius has produced some authorities, *Exercit. Sacra. in Mat.* XIV. 6. Compare *note* 1 on Mark vi. 21. Vol. VI. p. 406.

[p] The grave, the seat of *corruption*.] Beza here observes with his usual accuracy, that, as *Christ never saw corruption*, at all, the Greek διαφθορα [*corruption*] must signify *the grave*, as שחת in Hebrew also does: (compare Psal. xciv. 13. cvii. 20. and Lam. iv. 20.) just as the coffin of a man raised from the dead, as soon as he

this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

He hath said thus by the prophet, (Isa. lv. 3.) "*I will give you the sure mercies of David* q, that is, mercies which, by the resurrection of him whom I have now set upon the throne of David, are made sure to you, and shall prove eternal, as his life and reign." SECT. XXIX. Acts XIII. 34.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *Psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

35 *Wherefore also in another*, and that a very remarkable [*place*] *he saith*, (Psal. xvi. 10.) *Thou wilt not permit thine Holy One to see corruption.*" *Now* it is evident this must refer, not to the inspired writer himself, but to some other person; for

36 For David after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

36 *David*, by whom this psalm was written, *having* faithfully *served his own generation* of men, *according to the will of God, fell asleep*, that is, died, *and was gathered to his fathers, and* being laid among the dead of former ages, *saw corruption*, just in the same manner as other human bodies do, when the soul is separated from them. *But he* of whom these words were

37 But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

37 spoken, and *whom* as I have just been telling you, *God raised up* from the dead, *did not* continue in the grave so long as to *see corruption*, being laid there on the evening before the sabbath, and raised early in the morning after it.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

38 *Be it known therefore unto you, men [and] brethren, that by him*, even this glorious and exalted person, *the remission of sins is preached unto you*, even the full and assured pardon of all your offences, be they ever so great, and

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

39 ever so aggravated. *And by him every one who believeth* in him *is*, immediately in consequence of that faith, freely and fully *justified* and acquitted before God, not only from the guilt of smaller miscarriages, but even *from* the guilt of *all* those *things* which are in the highest degree criminal, and *from which ye could not* on any consideration whatever *be justified*

he was put into it, might be called his *sarcophagus*, though his *flesh* had not been consumed in it.

q *The sure mercies of David.*] The blessings of the Messiah's reign may be called *the sure mercies of David*, either as they were promised to that prince, to which sense the *translation* of 1727 determines it by rendering it, "*I will faithfully perform the promise made to David*," or as the name of *David* is sometimes given to the Messiah himself, as the great heir of David, of whose victories and glories David's were but a faint shadow. (Compare Jerem. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. xxxviii. 24, 25. Hos. iii. 5.) And, when Isaiah calls them *sure mercies*, he may probably refer to the last words of David, in which he uses the same expression with regard to them, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. and the propriety of the application here is evident as it was *the resurrection of Christ* which rendered the blessings he promised sure to his people, who without that could have had *no hope from him*, as the apostle argues at large, 1 Cor. xv. 14, *&c seq.* See. *Mr. Jeffery's True Grounds*, p. 139.

r *By*

SECT. XXIX.

tified by the law of Moses[r]; but which expressly were pronounced by that to be capital offences, for which the criminal was immediately doomed on conviction to die without mercy, so that no room was left for any sacrifice of atonement.

Acts XIII. 39.

40 This is the substance of the message with which I am charged: *See to it therefore*, I beseech you, as ye value your own souls, *that what is spoken in the prophets*, as the fatal consequence of rejecting it, *may not come upon you:* For they speak in very awful language to such; Isaiah for instance, when he says, (chap. xxviii. 14.) "*Behold ye despisers*, ye scornful men that look with haughty contempt on that corner stone which I lay in Zion, the judgment I will execute upon you is so terrible, that it shall be a vexation only to understand the report:" And in like manner too the prophet Habakkuk, when he says, (chap. i. 5.) Behold ye, and regard, *and wonder* marvellously, turn pale with terror, *and disappear*,[s] as those that shall perish at once, and vanish (as it were) out of sight, consumed in a moment by the fierceness of my vengeance: "*For I perform a* most amazing *work in your days*, even *a work which ye shall not believe, if any one tell it you.*" And the destruction God will bring upon you, if you reject the gospel, would appear far more incredible to you should it be described in all its terrors, than the desolation that was formerly threatened; which nevertheless, as your unbelieving fathers found to their cost, was circumstantially executed upon them.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets,

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

This

r *By the law of Moses.*] That law appointed *sin-offerings* to expiate *smaller offences*, so far as that the offender who offered them should be free from all farther prosecution on account of them. But this very view of them shews, how absolutely necessary to the being of society it was, that they should not be admitted in cases of *murder, adultery, &c.* These crimes therefore were made *capital;* nor was the dying criminal, however, penitent, allowed to offer them, which would have been quite inconsistent with the *temporal pardon* connected with them. But the expiatory *sacrifice of Christ* takes away the guilt of all sin; and, though it by no means affects the manner in which offenders would stand in *human courts*, (which the *Mosaic sacrifices* did,) it delivers from the *condemnation of God* in the invisible world; with respect to which the others could have no efficacy at all, as it was a very supposable case, that an impenitent sinner might present them in all their exactest forms. (Compare Rom. viii. 3. Gal. ii. 16. and Heb. x. 4.) See *Mr. Hallet*, Vol. II. Disc. 3. p. 269, *&c seq.*

s Turn pale with terror, *and disappear.*] There is an ambiguity in the word αφανισθητε, which may be rendered either of these ways; and as *both these senses* are consistent, and would probably concur, *both* are inserted in the *paraphrase*, though as I think, *the latter* more expressive, I have marked that as preferable. The attentive reader, who understands the original, will see, that I have often took this method.

t Address

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

This was the substance of Paul's plain and serious address to the Jews [t] in their synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, to which they replied nothing at present: *But while the Jews were going out of the synagogue* [u], *the Gentiles*, who out of curiosity were many of them assembled there, on the fame of the arrival of such celebrated men, earnestly *desired that these words might be spoken to them* again *the following sabbath* [x]; when they promised to attend themselves, and to bring as many of their friends as they could: And thus the assembly broke up for that time.

SECT. XXIX.

Acts XIII. 42.

IMPROVEMENT.

THAT the *scriptures* have been *publicly read* in Jewish and Christian *assemblies*, from the primitive times, is a noble evidence of their genuine authority, which it will be our undoubted wisdom to transmit to those who are to arise after us: From them, succeeding generations will be fully informed of that *edifying story* which the *apostle* here briefly recounts; of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their settlement *in the land of Canaan*, according to the promise of God to their fathers; and will also learn *the ungrateful returns* which they made to the Divine Goodness, when they *rejected the Lord from being king over them.* (1 Sam. viii. 7.) Ver. 15 17—19 20, 21

The character of David, as *a man after God's own heart, who would fulfil all his pleasure*, is surely worthy of being emulated by every 22

t Address to the Jews.] How impertinently Mr. Collins urges this as an instance of the *apostles* arguing with the Gentiles from allegorical interpretations of *prophecies*, must be evident to every attentive reader on various accounts; for these Scriptures are not *allegorically applied*, nor are they addressed chiefly to the Gentiles, but to Jews by birth or proselytism. (Compare ver. 16, and 46.) Several Gentiles were indeed present, who probably came out of curiosity, drawn by the fame of such celebrated preachers; and some of them might drop in, while he was speaking: And, as in the series of his discourse, they heard of an extraordinary person, by whom *all that believed in him* might obtain pardon and happiness, they were desirous of having that doctrine farther explained to them; and, upon a promise that it should be done, took care to engage a vast auditory against *the next Sabbath*, as we shall presently see.

u *While the Jews were going out of the synagogue.*] To render ἐξιοντων δε εκ της συναγωγης των Ἰουδαιων, *when Paul and Barnabas were gone out of the Jewish synagogue*, is both supposing the inspired historian to have made an unnecessary distinction with relation to *a synagogue*, which appeared before to belong to the Jews, and making him to have expressed himself in an ungrammatical manner; nor, on the other hand, can we well suppose, that Paul and the Gentiles stayed in the synagogue, when *all the Jews* had quitted it. I therefore render it, *while they were going out.*

x *The following sabbath.*] Some interpret τις το μεταξυ σαββατον of a day *between the two Sabbaths*, as there is a *tradition* among the Jews, mentioned by Dr. Lightfoot and others, that Ezra commanded them to assemble on the second and fifth days of the week, (our Mondays and Thursdays,) for the study of the law in their synagogues. But I think, that verse 44 determines the expression to the sense *our version* gives it. And Lud. Capellus has shewn, that it is not an unexampled manner of speaking.

SECT. XXIX. every Christian: In this respect, may *he who is feeble among the Lord's people, be like David!* (Zech. xii. 8.) Like him may we all
Ver. be solicitous to *serve our generation according to the will of God;*
36 to do all the good we can in the age and station in which Providence has fixed us, though it be in *a crooked and perverse generation;* gradually striving to mend it as fast as we can, and waiting our summons to *fall asleep,* as we quickly must, and *be gathered to our fathers!* Were we the greatest princes upon earth, we, like David, must *see corruption* in the grave: But let us rejoice to think, that Jesus, whom *God raised up according to his promise,*
33--37 *saw no corruption;* and if we are his people, he will ransom and redeem us from it. (Hos. xiii. 14.)

He, though so outrageously and infamously treated by the Jews, was nevertheless in the most convincing manner *declared to be the*
28, 29 *Son of God,* his only begotten Son: Such a *resurrection* proclaimed him to be so; (Rom. i. 4.) and, in consequence of it,
34 *the sure mercies of David* are now *given us* by him; and the plenary *remission* of all the most aggravated *transgressions* is *through him*
38 proclaimed: For ever adored be his glorious name! Most thankfully accepted be his overflowing grace! which *frees us from the*
39 *guilt* of those offences *which the law of Moses* condemned without mercy, and takes out the dye of *scarlet* and *crimson sins!*

40 Let us take heed lest, if we *despise so great a salvation,* we meet with an astonishing *vengeance;* the justice of which will be attested and applauded by the *messengers of God* to the Jewish and the
24--27 Christian church: *All the prophets,* and *John the Baptist* superior to them all, who *bore witness to Christ,* and all the *apostles* and succeeding *ministers* in every age, have concurred to *admonish us*
41 *of our danger;* and they will another day *rise up together in judgment against us,* if all these admonitions are given in vain.

SECT. XXX.

The Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, accept the gospel, which the Jews reject, and raise a persecution against the apostles, who therefore go to Iconium. Acts XIII. 43, *to the end.*

Acts XIII. 43.

SECT. XXX. A Large account was given in the preceding section of the discourse which Paul had addressed to the Jews, in their synagogue at
Acts XIII. 43 Antioch in Pisidia; *and* the effect of it was, that, *when the synagogue was broken up, many of the Jews, and of the devout proselytes,* who, though not of the stock of Israel, had embraced the

Acts XIII. 43. NOW when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews, and religious proselytes followed Paul

Paul and Barnabas; who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

the Jewish religion, *followed Paul and Barnabas*, professing their belief of the doctrine they taught; *who* gave them further exhortations to confirm them in the faith, and *speaking to them* with great earnestness, *persuaded them to continue in the grace of God*[a] which they had received, and to retain that gospel which they had now embraced.

SECT. XXX.

Acts XIII. 43

44 And the next Sabbath-day came almost the whole city together, to hear the word of God.

And on the following sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God, in consequence of the report which the Gentiles had spread abroad, of what had been delivered before, which awakened in many others an earnest desire of attending to that repetition of their extraordinary message, which the apostles had engaged themselves to make. 44

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

But the Jews, who continued strongly prejudiced against the message which had been delivered to them, *seeing the* Gentiles assembled in such great *multitudes, were filled with* zeal for the honour of their law and nation, which they foolishly imagined to be hurt by this new sect, and with indignation and *envy* at the regard which the inhabitants of Antioch shewed to it, beyond what they had ever done to the Jewish religion; *and* therefore they *opposed the things which were spoken by Paul* and Barnabas; not only *contradicting* them, *and* cavilling at their allegations, but also *blaspheming* and reviling these divine teachers, as impostors and seducers[b]. 45

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God

Then Paul and Barnabas, perceiving that no good impression could be made upon them, were not concerned about saving appearances; but *with great freedom of speech*, and with a fervent zeal, tempered by wisdom, and animated by unfeigned charity, *said, It was necessary*, according to the general instructions of our divine Master, 46

[a] *To continue in the grace of God.*] The *gospel* is often called *the grace of God*, and *the word of his grace*, with the utmost propriety, as containing the richest display of *his grace* in the free pardon of our sins by Christ, and the provision he has made for our sanctification and eternal happiness. Compare Acts. xiv. 3. xx. 24. Rom. vi. 14. Gal. v. 4. Col. i. 6. Tit. ii. 11. 1 Pet. v. 12.

[b] *Blaspheming* and reviling, &c.] The word βλασφημιας, in this connection with αντιλεγοντες, must signify *their giving them abusive language*. Probably they charged them to their faces with *falsehood* and *villainy*, and represented the cause they were carrying on as most contemptible and wicked. It may seem strange, this did not prevent the conversion of the Gentiles: But they would easily see, it was the regard that Paul and Barnabas expressed for *them*, which had exasperated the Jews; and it is not improbable, that some *miracles* might have been wrought during the preceding week, which would set *the character* of these *divine teachers* above the danger of being overthrown by the malicious insinuations, or confident assertions of these furious opposers.

[c] *Adjudge*

ACT. XXX.

Acts XIII. 46

Master, *that the word of God*, which we are come to deliver, *should first be spoken to you* Jews; for, undeserving as you are of such a favour, he has directed us, that wherever we come we should open our ministry with an address to you, inviting you to faith and repentance, that you may in the first place partake of the benefits of his kingdom: (Compare Luke xxiv. 47.) *But since you* thus disdainfully *thrust it away from you, and* by that very action do in effect *adjudge* and condemn *yourselves* as *unworthy of* that *eternal life* and glory, which through the riches of his grace he has so freely offered to you[c], *behold, we turn* ourselves *to the Gentiles*[d], and declare to them, that they are also invited into the church of the Messiah, and shall, upon their believing in him, be admitted to all the privileges of his people, as readily as if they had been descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or had been trained up in the worship of the true God, and were by circumcision entered most expressly into covenant with

47 him. *For so the Lord hath charged us* to do[e]; (Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts i. 8.) in consequence of that prediction which was uttered by Isaiah in the name of God, (Isa. xlix. 6.) where he addresses himself to the Messiah, [*saying*,] "*I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation to the* remotest *ends of the earth.*" Thither therefore will we carry his saving name, and we doubt not but they will thankfully accept that gospel which you so ungratefully despise and reject.

48 *And the Gentiles hearing* [*these things*,] that the way now was open for their admission into covenant with God, and they were welcome to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, *rejoiced* greatly at the happy tidings, *and glorified the word*

God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the

c *Adjudge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.*] This text most plainly shews, that persons are said to be *self-condemned*, who furnish out matter of condemnation from their own words, though they do not actually pass sentence on themselves; for nothing was farther from the thoughts of these Jews, than *declaring themselves unworthy of eternal life* for not believing the gospel; they rather expected that life by rejecting it.

d *Behold, we turn to the Gentiles.*] The meaning is not, that they intended *no more* to make an offer to the Jews; for we find they continued to address them *first*, wherever they came. But they openly declared, that, while they continued at Antioch, they should lose no more time in fruitless attempts on their ungrateful *countrymen*, but would employ themselves in doing what they could for the conversion of the Gentiles there.

e *For so the Lord hath charged us.*] They might have argued this from the *texts* quoted in the *paraphrase*; but Paul had also received a more express command to this purpose. Compare Acts xxii. 21. xxvi. 17, 18.

f *As*

the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

word of the Lord, which had invited them to share in all the blessings of his grace, and brought the knowledge of salvation to them: *And as many* of those who were present *as were*, through the operation of divine grace upon their hearts, in good earnest *determined for eternal life*, and brought to a resolution of courageously facing all opposition in the way to it, *believed*[t], and openly embraced the gospel; which others, who were remiss and unaffected about their future and everlasting concerns, stupidly neglected, though they could find nothing solid to alledge against the evidence by which it was supported. *And* as these new converts joined their most zealous and affectionate labours with those of Paul and Barnabas to propagate it, *the word of the Lord was borne on*, as with a mighty torrent, *throughout all that region*, which by this means was watered as with a river of salvation.

SECT. XXX.

Acts XIII. 48.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

49

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women

But the Jews, provoked beyond all patience at such a conduct, and at such success, *stirred up* [*some devout woman of considerable rank*, who

50

† *As many as were determined for eternal life, believed.*] I cannot think, with Sir Norton Knatchbull, that we should take τεταγμενοι here to signify the same with συντεταγμενοι, and, placing the *comma* after it, render the clause, *As many as were met together*, [that is, all the Gentiles,) *believed to* [or *in*] *eternal life*, which I think neither the import nor order of the words will permit.——Much less can I allow of Mr. Jos. Mede's interpretation, that τεταγμενοι εις ζωην αιωνιον is a *periphrasis* to express *proselytes of the gate*, (supposing the distinction of *such proselytes* ever so well founded,) since we never meet with the *phrase* elsewhere as a description of them, which indeed might much better suit *other proselytes*, and since there is no reason to believe, that *they all*, and only they, were *now converted*, or even that the *chief* number of converts was *among them*, when *almost the whole city were gathered together*.——The word τασσω has various significations: It is rendered *ordained* only here, and Rom. xiii. 1, (where the *margin*, I think more properly, renders it *ordered*:) elsewhere it is rendered *determined*, Acts xv. 3; *addicted*, 1 Cor. xvi. 15; and most frequently, *appointed*, Mat. xxviii. 16; Acts xxii. 10; xxviii. 23. In the *Greek Classics*, I think, it generally in its *passive form* signifies "Men, who having been *appointed* for some military expedition, (and *set* in their proper offices, as we render it, (Luke vii. 8,) are drawn up in battle array for that purpose." (See Dr. Hammmond's learned *note* here with Le Clerc's addition to it, and *Raphelius ex Herod*, p. 353—362.) So that it expresses, or refers at once to, the action of their commander in marshalling them according to the plan he has formed in his own mind, and to their own presenting themselves in their proper places, to be led on to the intended expedition. This I take to be precisely *its sense here* and have therefore chosen the word *determined*, as having *an ambiguity* something like that in the *original* Perhaps if *one word alone* were to be used for τασσω in all the places where it is used, it should be *ordered*. The meaning of the sacred penman seems to be, that all who were deeply and seriously concerned about their eternal happiness, (whether *that concern* began now, or were of longer date,) *openly embraced the gospel*; for surely none could be said *to believe*, who did not make *an open profession of Christianity*, especially in such circumstances; and, wherever *this temper*, was, it was undoubtedly the effect of *a divine operation* on their hearts, and of God's gracious *purpose* thus to call them, and *list them* (as it were) in their proper places *in his army* under the great *Captain of their salvation*.

‡ *Devout*

SECT. XXX.

Acts XIII. 50.

who having been proselyted to their religion, were peculiarly zealous for it[g]; *and* also applied themselves to *the magistrates of the city*, representing these new preachers as exciters of sedition, and innovators in religion, who might occasion danger to the state; *and* thus they *raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their territories* with violence and infamy.

men and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 *But they*, when they were going from the boundaries of that place, *shook off the dust of their feet* for a testimony *against them*; as their Lord had commanded his apostles to do, in token of the certain ruin which should befall such despisers of his gospel: (Mark vi. 11.) *And* departing from thence, they *came to* the neighbouring city of *Iconium*[h], and there renewed the proclamation of those glad tidings, which many of the inhabitants of Antioch had so ungratefully rejected.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 *But the disciples* who were left there *were filled with* great *joy*, that so blessed a message had reached their hearts; *and* as Paul and Barnabas had laid their hands upon them, they were furnished *with* an abundant communication of the gifts as well as graces of *the Holy Spirit*[i], whereby they were not only confirmed in the faith which

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

[g] *Devout women of considerable rank.*] I am much at a loss to know, why so many learned writers interpret this of *proselytes of the gate*. It is quite unnatural to suppose, either that *such* should be called *devout*, rather than *those* that had fully embraced the *Mosaic religion*, or that they should be more zealous than the others, in resenting an imaginary injury done to the whole body of the Jews. But, taking them for *women of figure* newly *proselyted to Judaism*, and full of an opinion of the sanctity and privileges of the people to whom they now belonged, nothing can be more natural than to suppose, that they would instigate *their husbands*, and other relations, to the warmest resentment against Paul and Barnabas, whom they would look upon as *levellers* and *apostates*.

[h] *Came to Iconium*] Raphelius *(ex Xenoph.* p. 161—164,) has taken great pains to settle the *geography* of this place, and has fully proved, that it lay, not (as it is often placed,) in the *middle* of Lycaonia, which occasions some perplexity in the following passages; but *on its western borders*, and just on the confines of Pisidia, Galatia, and Phrygia, to the latter of which it seems once to have belonged.

[i] *Were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*] Hence both Lord Barrington, *(Miscell. Sacra.* Vol. I, p. 105, & *seq.)* and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 37,) infer, that *the Holy Spirit* descended on these converts *without the imposition of hands*, and perhaps *in flaming tongues*. But this appears to me a mere conjecture, and indeed a very improbable one. The phrase of *being filled with the Spirit*, can, to be sure, never prove it. (Compare Acts vi. 3, 5; vii. 55; xi. 24; xiii. 9; Luke i, 15; and especially Eph. v. 18.) And had the analogy, which (I think, quite without reason) they suppose expedient between the imagined *different cases* of the first fruits of the *proselytes of the gate*, and of the *idolatrous Gentiles*, been really observed, then, according to the principles of these learned writers themselves, *such an immediate effusion of the Spirit* must have fallen on Sergius Paulus, as it did on Cornelius and his friends, rather than on these Antiochians, whom they (for reasons I am yet to learn,) call *the harvest of idolatrous Gentiles*, who were not called till the gospel had been preached *through all* Cyprus and Pamphylia, both to Jews and Gentiles.

which they had newly embraced, but were also rendered capable of carrying on the interests of Christianity in that place, when the first planters of their church could no longer continue to cultivate and water it. SECT. XXX. Acts XIII. 52.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is a great comfort to the *ministers of the gospel*, that amidst that *incredulity* which too generally prevails, any are found who will *credit the gospel*; any *to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed*, in conquering their prejudices against it: With *a chosen remnant of these*, God will support his faithful servants. O that the instances of that consolation may be more numerous, and more remarkable in our days! Ver. 43

It is matter of some encouragement when *numbers* croud to attend upon the preaching of the gospel; for *faith cometh by hearing*. (Rom. x. 17.) They who *reject the council of God against themselves*, will no doubt *be provoked* at such a circumstance; and the malignity and *envy* of their hearts will stir up opposition and contention: But God knows how to *bring good out of evil;* nor should his ministers be discouraged by *the contradiction of sinners*, but rather *turn themselves to those* who may be more willing to hear. In the mean time, let those that *thrust from them the word of God* know, that, in the language of scripture, *they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life;* and since they will not condescend to accept of it on these terms, the great Author thereof will not condescend to give it on any other. And the day is coming when we shall see, and the whole world shall see, how much reason they have *to glory* in that *height of Spirit* which they now shew. 44 45 46

Let it be the daily joy of our souls, that *the Lord Jesus Christ was given for a light of the Gentiles*, and *for God's salvation to the ends of the earth. Through the tender mercies of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us*, (Luke i. 78.) Let us pray that it may arise and shine upon the remotest nations! And indeed if we are entirely unconcerned about its *propagation* in the world, we have great reason to fear, that we have ourselves *no part* in the saving benefits which it confers. May *the silver trumpet* every where sound, to awaken the nations *to list themselves* in this holy war *under Christ*, against all the enemies of salvation; and may many appear *determined for eternal life*, and like these converts of Antioch courageously *set themselves in battle array* against every thing which would oppose their progress towards it! 47 48

Vain then will all the rage of *persecution* be, by whomsoever it 50

SECT. XXX.

is *excited* or maintained; though by persons of the *highest rank* or the most honoured characters. If the messengers of Christ be
51 *cast out of one place*, they will appear with renewed zeal *in another*: And they who are *proselyted to Christianity*, though *in a great fight of affliction*, will have *the Spirit of God and of glory resting upon them*; and will be enabled to *rejoice*, not only in the midst of their afflictions, but on account of them. In the mean while, *the dust shaken off from the shoes* of the rejected *ambassadors of the Prince of peace* will be recorded *as a witness* against those that have *despised their message*, and will expose them to *a final condemnation* in the day of judgment, *more intolerable than that* which was once executed on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, or which their wretched inhabitants are then to expect. (Mark vi. 11.)

SECT. XXXI.

Paul and Barnabas, after some stay at Iconium, go to Lystra: The inhabitants of that city, struck by a miracle wrought on a lame man, could hardly be restrained from giving them divine honours. Acts XIV. 1—18.

Acts XIV. 1.

SECT. XXXI.

IT was observed in the preceding section, that Paul and Barnabas being driven away from Antioch in Pisidia, by the persecution which the Jews raised against them, retired to Iconium, a city of Lycaonia in the Lesser Asia, to the north of Antioch. *And it came to pass*, in a very little time after their arrival *at Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews* there, *and spake* on the great subject of the gospel salvation *in such a manner, that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks be-*
2 *lieved*[a]. *But the unbelieving Jews*, who were greatly provoked at the growing success of the gospel, and studied all they could to put a stop to its progress, *stirred up the minds of the heathen* inhabitants of the place, *and filled them with malignity against the* Christian *brethren, and* especially against those celebrated teachers of a religion

Acts XIV. 1.

Acts XIV. 1. AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

a *Multitude——of the Greeks believed.*] Dr. Whitby and several other learned writers seem to limit this text, more than there is any reason to do, by supposing the Greeks here mentioned to have been, chiefly at least, *proselytes of the gate*. The argument from their being found in the *Jewish synagogues* is very inconclusive; for, as was observed before, the fame of such extraordinary teachers as Paul and Barnabas might naturally draw together great numbers of people, who did not usually worship in the synagogues.

b *For*

religion with respect to which they had entertained such unfavourable prejudices. Nevertheless God was pleased to interpose in such a manner as to prevent their rage from running presently to an extreme, and to animate his faithful servants amidst all the opposition and hardships they met with; *for a considerable time therefore they continued* their abode there[b], *speaking freely in* [*the cause of*] *the Lord* Jesus Christ[c], *who bare witness to the word of his grace* which they delivered, *and gave* a variety of miraculous *signs and wonders to be done by their hands*, which were of service to confirm the faith of the new converts; and to prevail with many others to receive the gospel, and might have convinced all the inhabitants, if they had exercised a becoming candour. *But the multitude of the city was divided* into two opposite parties, *and some were* of the same mind *with the* unbelieving *Jews*, whom they joined in desiring that these new preachers might be expelled as disturbers of the established religion; *and others* most cordially fell in *with the apostles*, whom they received as messengers from God, to guide men to true piety and eternal happiness. *But* on the whole, the magistrates favoured the contrary side; and *as a violent attempt was* going to be *made* by those who had conspired against them, *both of the Gentiles and of the Jews, with their* respective *rulers, to injure and* even *to stone them* as blasphemers; when the project was just ripe for execution,

Acts XIV. 3.

3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

b *For a considerable time, therefore,* &c.] Some think the *second verse* should be included in a *parenthesis*, and that the particle [*therefore*] refers to the success that Paul and Barnabas had met with at Iconium, (which had been mentioned ver. 1,) as what induced them to *continue preaching* there *for a long time*; while others, who would make no break in the *connection*, choose rather that μεν ουν should be rendered *For indeed*; and, supposing the rage of the Jews to have been exasperated by their *long stay* and preaching there, would render the beginning of this verse, *For indeed they had tarried a long time*, &c. (See *Dr. Whitby in loc.*) But the *connection* may be well enough preserved, though we retain the usual sense of the particle ουν, if we consider what is here expressed, as an account of the great firmness and undaunted zeal, with which these faithful ministers pursued their work; that, since the Jews were so intent upon opposing them, and laboured to incense the Gentiles too against them, *they therefore* thought it needful to *continue preaching* with the greater boldness, and to make *the longer stay* there, for the establishment and confirmation of the new converts; and for the vindication of their own character, and of the cause they were engaged in, from the injurious calumnies and false aspersions of their enemies, till they proceeded to such violent methods, that they no longer could remain with any safety there.

c *Speaking freely in* [*the cause of*] *the Lord.*] Some would render the words παῤῥησιαζομενοι επι τω Κυριω, *being inspired with great resolution by the Lord*; but, though this was undoubtedly the case, I am not sure the words themselves express it. Beza renders it, in a *dependance on the Lord*; and indeed *the original* will very naturally bear that sense.

d *Having*

SECT. XXXI.

execution, Paul and Barnabas *having received intelligence of it*[d], prevented the attempt by withdrawing from thence, and getting away

Acts XIV. 6. from Iconium, *they fled to Lystra and Derbe*, which were both *cities of Lycaonia, and to the adjacent country*, near the borders of Cappadocia and Galatia, which were contiguous provinces. *And there they preached the gospel* in a

7 very successful manner, so that the church was still propagated by the very methods taken to destroy it.

8 But there happened one circumstance while they were in these parts, which was much taken notice of; *and*, as it gave occasion to a remarkable occurrence, it will not be improper to relate it more particularly. *There sat a certain man at Lystra*, [*who was*] *disabled in his feet*, and thereby rendered incapable of providing a maintenance for himself, *being so lame from his mother's womb, that he never had walked* at all.

9 Now it so happened, that in some place of public resort, near which he was laid, to beg for alms of those that passed by, *this man heard Paul speaking, who fixing his eyes upon him, and seeing*, by the ardour and humility which was expressed in his countenance, *that he had faith* sufficient *to be healed*, and finding also in himself that the power of Christ was to be displayed on this occasion, directed his speech to the poor

10 cripple, And *said with a loud voice*, in the hearing of all that were assembled there, as one that was conscious of the divine authority by which he then acted, Arise, and *stand upright on thy feet: And* the lame man immediately attempted it, in a believing dependance on the power of Christ, which wrought so effectually in him, that *he leaped up* at once from the place where he sat, with an astonishing agility, *and* not only stood upright, but *walked* about as firmly and steadily as if he had been accustomed to walk from his infancy.

11 *And the multitude* who were present when this wonderful cure was wrought, *seeing what Paul had done* by only speaking a word, were all in raptures

6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lift up their voices, saying in the

[d] *Having received intelligence of it.*] They were, as it should seem, informed of it, when the mob was actually raised, and coming towards the place where they were. Some have imagined, it might be *by inspiration*; but I see no necessity for having recourse to that.

[e] *In*

the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

raptures of astonishment, and *lifted up their voices* in loud acclamations *saying in the Lycaonian language*[e], *The gods are descended* from heaven *to us, in the* form and *likeness of men*[f]. SECT. XXXI. Acts XIV. 13.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

12 *And*, perceiving *Barnabas* to be a person of the better presence, and of the more majestic port, *they called* him *Jupiter; and Paul*, who was a little active man, they called *Mercury*[g], *because he was the leader of the discourse*, on which account they thought he might more probably be their God of eloquence.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice

13 *And the priest of* that *Jupiter* who was esteemed the tutelar deity of that place, and [*whose image*] *was* therefore placed in a temple erected to him *before their city*, in the suburbs[h], not far from the place were the miracle was wrought, immediately *brought oxen* crowned *with garlands*[i], according to their usual manner, *to the gates* of the place where Paul and Barnabas were; *and would, with the multitude, have offered sacrifice*

[e] *In the Lycaonian language.*] This, as some say, was not a dialect of the Greek, but rather approached the Syriac, as that of Cappadocia is said to have done.

[f] *The gods are descended to us in the likeness of men.*] It appears from numberless passages in the Heathen writers, that they suppose this often to have happened. See *Homer. Odyss.* ρ. ver. 485, & *seq. Hesiod. Op.* & *Dier.* ver. 249, 254, & *seq. Catull. de Nupt. Pel.* ver. 384, & *seq.* and the notes of Grotius and Elsner on this place, which last great critic has shewn, that this notion particularly prevailed with respect to Jupiter and Mercury. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 420—422,

[g] *Barnabas they called Jupiter, and Paul Mercury.*] Chrysostom observes, (and after him Mr. Fleming, *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 226,) that the Heathens represented Jupiter as an old but vigorous man, of a noble and majestic aspect, and large robust make, which therefore he supposes might be the form of Barnabas; whereas Mercury appeared young, little, and nimble, as Paul might probably do, for he was yet but a young man. Yet the reason given by Luke is different, and more naturally leads to the turn given in the *paraphrase.*——Jamblicus calls Mercury Θεὸν ὁ των λογων ηγεμων, with a remarkable correspondence to the words of the sacred historian, αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ ἡγεμὼν τοῦ λογου. See other learned illustrations of this title, cited by Mr. Biscoe at *Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 8, p. 313, 314.——Mr. Harrington well observes, (in his *Works*, p. 330,) that this persuasion might gain the more easily on the minds of the Lycaonians, on account of the well-known fable of Jupiter and Mercury, who were said to have descended from heaven in human shape, and to have been entertained by Lycaon, from whom the Lycaonians received their name.

[h] *The priest of Jupiter, [whose image] was before their city.*] Elsner has shewn, that it was customary to build temples to their deities in the suburbs, and to set up their images *before the city* at the gates. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 425.) See also *Mr. Biscoe*, chap. viii. § 9, p. 314.——It has been argued from hence, that the Heathens considered *their several images*, of Jupiter for instance, as so many distinct Jupiters, that is, as having some spirit sent from *the god*, to whom their worship was ultimately referred, to reside in them; which, as Mr. Warburton well observes, may account for the disputes between two Jupiters, the *Tonans*, and the *Capitolinus*, mentioned by Suetonius. *August. cap.* 91. See *Warb. Div. Legat.* Vol. I. p. 279,—281. *Not.*

[i] *Oxen crowned with garlands.*] It is well known, that the Heathens used to crown, both the *images* of their deities, and the *victims* they offered to them, with *chaplets of flowers*, as appears from a multitude of passages both in the Latin and Greek classics. See *Raphel. Not. ex Herod.* p. 361; and *Mr. Biscoe*, as above, p. 315.

[k] *Obnoxious*

SECT. XXXI.

Acts XIV. 13.

sacrifice [to them,] to acknowledge the obligation they were under to them for this condescending and beneficent visit, and to take this opportunity of imploring their continued protection in their public and private affairs.

sacrifice with the people.

14 *But* as they were leading on the sacrificial procession towards them, *the apostles Barnabas and Paul, hearing of* the purpose for which *it* was intended, were struck with a becoming horror at the proposal, and *rent their mantles* in token of that mixture of indignation and sorrow with which they beheld this strange abuse of a miracle, wrought to destroy that idolatry which from thence they took occasion to practise; *and* in this moving and expressive manner they *ran in among the multitude, crying out* with the greatest earnestness, *And saying,*

14 *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 O *Sirs*, unhappy and misguided men as ye are, *why do ye these things* with regard to us? We are not what ye imagine us to be; and far from having any title to divine honours, we assure you that *we also are* mere mortal *men* as others are, *obnoxious to the same* common *infirmities* of human life *with yourselves*[k], *and are* come hither with a design of *preaching the Gospel to you, that you may* be directed to the proper object of religious adoration, and may effectually be taught to *turn from these vanities* which you now worship[l], *to* Jehovah, *the* one only *living* and true *God, who made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and all things which are* contained

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea and all things that are therein:

16 *in them; Who in former generations permitted all the* heathen *nations to walk in their own ways*, and left them under the darkness into which they were gradually fallen, without giving them any revelation of himself, either by a written

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 law, or by prophetic messengers: *Though* even then *he did not leave himself* entirely *without witness*, nor were they altogether destitute of any

17 Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did

[k] *Obnoxious to the same* common *infirmities.*] This is also the meaning of the word ομοιοπαθης, Jam. v. 17, and nothing could be more absurd, or injurious to the character of these holy men, than to imagine, that it refers in either of the places to any thing of *ungoverned passion.*

[l] *From these vanities.*] A bold expression, when considered as addressed to a whole croud of bigotted *idolaters*, with their *priests* at their head. It naturally leads us to reflect, how unlike the conduct of the *apostles* was to that of the *Heathen philosophers*, who, instead of entering a generous protest against the absurdities of the established worship, though it often led to such scandalous immoralities, meanly conformed to it themselves, and taught their disciples to esteem *such conformity* an essential part of *a good citizen's character*, which seems to have been the design even of the dying words of Socrates himself, a circumstance hardly to be mentioned without tears. See *Mr. Warburton's Div. Legat.* Vol. I. p. 322.

did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

any means of coming to a better knowledge [m]; for he was continually testifying his deity, his presence, and his care, by the substantial fruits of his liberality, *doing good* to his creatures with a bountiful hand, [*and*] *giving us* all, whether Jews or Gentiles, refreshing *showers of rain from heaven*, which none of the idols could grant; *and*, through the concurring influences of the sun, producing *fruitful seasons*, administering thereby not only to the necessities but the delights of life, and *filling our hearts with food and* with *gladness* too. Since therefore to all his other favours he has now added this, of sending us with these miraculous powers to instruct you in his nature, and to point out to you the way to happiness, forbear these vain and offensive rites; and set yourselves seriously to attend to the gospel, which it is our great business here to proclaim. SECT. XXXI. Acts XIV. 17

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

And saying these things, plain and reasonable as they were, *they hardly restrained the people from* their purpose, and scarcely could prevent their *sacrificing to them.* 18

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY are *the ministers of Christ*, in the midst of labours and persecution too, if they have the presence of their master with them; and if *the Lord*, as in this instance, *bear witness to the word of his grace.* Almighty Saviour, leave us not destitute of that presence which is our hope and our joy! But *bear witness* with all thy faithful servants, while they are bearing their testimony to thee! Ver. 3

Infinite Wisdom governs those revolutions in providence which seem most mysterious. These repeated *oppositions* which the *apostles* met with in their work, seemed to threaten *their destruction*; but they served in effect to render *their testimony more credible*, when borne in the midst of so many dangers: They served also 4, 6

to

[m] *He did not leave himself without witness.*] As a friend, in sending us frequent presents, expresses his remembrance of us and affection to us, though he neither speak nor write, so all the gifts of the divine bounty which are scattered abroad on every side, (as a late pious philosopher most justly observes,) are so many witnesses sent to attest the divine care and goodness; and they speak it in very sensible language to the heart, though not to the ear. (See *Nature Displayed*, Vol. II. p. 7.) Raphelius (*ex Herod*, p. 365, 366) has a curious note here, in which he shews that the Pagans spoke of *rain* as *given by God*, and which is very remarkable, *not as coming from the Gods*; and this he thinks a remnant of *patriarchal piety*, in a form of speech older than the first idolatry: So that there is no need, with Dr. Hammond, to have recourse to the *Jewish proverb*, that *the keys of life, rain, and the resurrection, were always kept in God's own hand.* Compare Jer. xiv. 22.

SECT. XXXI.

to exercise the graces of these *new converts;* to add a growing evidence to christianity throughout the remotest ages; and they were the means of *spreading the gospel* to a greater variety of places, when the *apostles* were forced to make *such short visits* at many, through the *inhospitality* of those from whom they deserved a quite different reception.

Ver. 8, 9, 10 11-13

The *cure of this cripple* was but one miracle of a thousand which the power of Christ made common in those days; the effect of it one way and another was very remarkable: *The multitude* struck with the exertion of an energy truly divine, by an error to which human nature is (alas) too incident, *fix their eyes on the instruments,* and pay that honour to *mortal men* which was due only to that God by whom that wonderful work was wrought. Yet a mixture of *piety* amidst all that *superstition* cannot but strike the mind with some *pleasure,* joined with the *compassion* we must feel to find it so wretchedly misguided and allayed. When they thought *the gods were come down in human form,* they were desirous immediately to *pay honour to them.* The Lord Jesus Christ *is God manifested in the flesh;* but alas, in how different a manner was he generally received! received indeed with *outrage* and *infamy,* instead of that *prostrate adoration* to which he had so just a claim.

14

These his servants with an honest indignation *reject the homage* offered to them, and regard it *with horror* rather than delight. It was a courageous testimony which they bore to *the vanity* of these *Heathen deities,* while surrounded with *adorers* and *their priests.* While they confess *their own infirmities,* as *weak and*

15, 17

mortal men, they with heroic boldness and sacred truth proclaim *the one living and true God,* the Creator and Governor of *heaven and earth,* of *the sea, and all that is therein.* Let us adore him, as the author of all the blessings of providence, *as giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons;* and while *our hearts* are *filled with food and gladness,* let our hearts rejoice in him, and to him let us devote that vigour which we derive from his daily bounty. Above all, let us praise him that we have not *these witnesses alone,* of his presence, his power, and his goodness; but that he who *once left the nations to go on in their own ways,* has now revealed unto us the path of salvation, and given us *that true bread from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall live for ever.* (John vi. 58.)

SECT.

SECT. XXXII.

Paul and Barnabas being driven from Lystra, by a persecution excited by the Jews, return through Derbe, Pisidia, and Pamphylia, to Antioch in Syria. where they make some abode. Acts XIV. 19. *to the end.*

Acts XIV. 19.

AND there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

Acts XIV. 19.

WHEN Paul and Barnabas had put a stop to that undue respect the people would have shewn them, and had instructed them to worship none but the true God, they still continued for a little while at Lystra, and endeavoured to improve that advantage which the cure of the lame man had given them, for preaching the gospel there. *But* though they were so happy as to make some converts to it, they were soon interrupted in their work; for quickly after this [*some*] *Jews came thither from* the neighbouring cities of *Antioch and Iconium, and persuaded the multitude* to disbelieve what they taught; and representing them to be deceivers, they prejudiced their minds to such a degree against their persons and their doctrine, that the very people who but just before would have adored them as deities, now rose to put them to death as malefactors: *And* accordingly *having stoned Paul* in a tumultuous manner in the streets, *they dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead*[a]. *But as the disciples were gathered about him,* with a view of performing the last office of affection to him, in bearing him to his funeral with proper regard, to their unspeakable surprise they found him so restored by the power of Christ, that *he* immediately *rose up* as in perfect health[b], *and* his bruises

SECT. XXXII.

Acts XIV. 19.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and came into the city; and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

20

[a] *Having stoned Paul they dragged him out of the city,* &c.] Probably they left his body exposed to the open air, intending that he (to whom a few days before they would have *sacrificed oxen,*) should be a prey to wild beasts or birds. There might be something extraordinary in the appearance of his body in this circumstance, which led them to conclude *he was dead,* while he was yet alive: for one can hardly imagine, that they would have been contented with any very slight and transient inquiry, whether he were dead or not.—It is observable, we read of no such injury offered to Barnabas, who seems to have had no share in the effects of this popular fury; and it is probable, that *Paul's distinguished zeal* marked him out as the object of their distinguished cruelty. But it is surely a strange thought of Woltzogenius, that this was permitted by God as a *punishment* on Paul for the concern he had in *stoning Stephen.* However, the *apostle* might well insert it in the brief history he gives us of his sufferings, 2 Cor. xi. 23—27. of which few are particularly mentioned in this book.

[b] *He rose up,* as in perfect health.] That just

SECT. XXXII.

bruises were so healed, that he *entered into the city* again [c], *and* was not only able to walk about it, but *the next day* found that *he* was capable of undertaking a journey, and *departed with Barnabas to Derbe*, a city of Lycaonia, on the borders of Cappadocia; as they did not think it convenient to proceed in their progress to Galatia, Phrygia, or any more distant province.

Acts XIV. 20.

21 *And having preached the gospel* at Derbe, *to* the inhabitants of *that* populous *city, and made a considerable number of disciples* there, *they* trod back the road they had taken, and *returned* first *to Lystra* again, *and* then *to Iconium and Antioch* in Pisidia; *confirming the souls of the disciples* which they had made in those places in their former journey, *exhorting them to continue in the* christian *faith*, with a stedfastness becoming the evidence and importance of it; *and* [*testifying*] *that it is necessary we should enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations*, which, as God has been pleased to order matters, will unavoidably lie in our way; but which it will be abundantly worth our while to encounter in so good a cause, and in the views of so glorious a reward.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch.

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 *And when they had* with the concurrent suffrage of the people *constituted presbyters for them in every church* [d], who might take care of them when

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and

just after he had been *stoned*, and dragged about the streets, and *left for dead*, he should *rise* and *walk back into the city*, must certainly be the effect of *a miraculous cure*, approaching, as near as one can conceive, to *a resurrection from the dead*. This is the more illustrated by his going *the next day* to Derbe; whereas, in a course of nature he would then have *felt his bruises* much more than at first, and probably, after the best care that could have been taken of him, would hardly have been able to turn himself in his bed.

c *Entered into the city.*] Probably *by shewing himself alive*, among the new converts at least, if not to others, he hoped, as he reasonably might, to *confirm their faith* in the gospel, and their courageous adherence to it.—Permit me to add here, that though it was not till the next journey hither, that Paul formed his intimate acquaintance with Timothy, (Acts xvi. 1, 2.) yet since he speaks of Timothy, as having been *a witness of his sufferings here*, and in the neighbourhood, (2 Tim. iii. 10. 11.) whereas we read nothing of any remarkable sufferings in that *second progress*; Acts xvi. 4.) it seems, he *began his acquaintance now* with that hopeful youth, whose pious mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois, (2 Tim. i. 5.) seem now to have been entered into the *christian church*, though he was not admitted till afterwards.

d *When they had constituted presbyters for them*, &c.] Mr. Harrington (in his *Works*, p. 327.) renders the words χειροτονησαντες αυτοις πρεσβυτερους, *ordained them elders by the votes of the people*, urging the authority of Suidas, who explains χειροτονια by ψηφου παντος κυρωσις "the *election* of magistrates, or *ratification* of laws *by many*, signified by holding up, or stretching out the hand." (Compare 2 Cor. viii. 19.) Raphelius has confirmed the same interpretation; (*Not. ex Xen.* p. 165.) And the *old English Bible* translated it, *When they had ordained them elders by election.* The celebrated author first mentioned has endeavoured largely to vindicate this interpretation, from the exceptions of Dr. Hammond, Dr. Seaman, and others, who make χειροτονια the same with χειροθεσια, or *the laying on of hands*. See *Harrington's Prerogative of popular government*, chap. v.

——This

and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

when they were gone away to other parts, *having prayed* to God *with* solemn *fasting*, that a blessing might attend their inspection and labours, *they committed them*, in the infant and distressed state of the church at that time, *to* the guardianship and care of *the Lord* Jesus Christ, *in whom they had believed*, and so quitted them, with a chearful confidence that he would carry on that good work, which in the midst of so much opposition he had happily begun amongst them.

SECT. XXXII.

Acts XIV. 25.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

24 *And passing through* the province of *Pisidia*, *they came* again *to Pamphylia*, which was the country where they had landed when they came from Cyprus. (Chap. xiii. 13.)

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

25 *And having spoken the word* of the kingdom *in* the city of *Perga*, where they had been before, *they went down* from thence *to Attalia*, which was a maritime town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence

26 *And* not thinking it proper at that time to travel through Cilicia, though they were then on the borders of it, and some Christian churches were already planted there, (compare chap. ix. 30. xv. 41.) *they* took shipping, and *sailed from thence* to the coast of Syria, and went

——This is not a place for discussing so nice a question; but, as I am in my own judgment convinced he is in the right, I chose to *paraphrase* the passage agreeable to that notion, though I do not fix it in the *translation*. I have not rendered it *ordained*, because custom has, among us especially affixed to that word in such a connection, the idea of *laying on hands in prayer*, to invest a person with, or mark him out for *the ministerial office*: and this which I doubt not was here done, seems to be intimated in the following clause.—It seemed to me, that the word [*constitute*] would properly express *the apostles presiding* in that previous *choice*, which probably *the people* signified by χειροτονια, *the stretching out their hands*. And this interpretation appears most naturally to suit *the circumstances of things*, as well as the import of the *original words* made use of; for *the people* would, no doubt, have a great deference to the judgment of *the apostles* in the choice of *those officers*, who were in some degree to fill up their places in exercising the *Christian ministry* among them; and on the other hand, whatever extraordinary power their institution to this office by *the apostles* might have given, and whatever acts of direct authority it might have warranted, yet considering how much the comfort and usefulness (not to say *the subsistence*) of these *ministers*, who had no human laws to establish them, would depend upon *the free consent of the people*, and what a natural authority the express declaration of *that consent* would give them in the execution of their office, the prudence, as well as the known humility of *the apostles*, would lead them to take *that consent* as expressly as they could; (compare 1 Cor. ix. 14, 15. 2 Cor. xi. 9. 1 Thess. ii. 6. Philem. ver. 8, 9. 1 Pet. v. 3.) which it would be the more natural and expedient to do, as *the civil government* of these places was in a great measure *popular*, (as Mr. Harrington has shewn, *ibid.* chap. ii.) and as the *apostles* also knew, how expressly *the consent of the Jewish people* had been taken in the settlement of their *civil* and *ecclesiastical* affairs, which the same writer has also well illustrated, *ibid.* chap. iii.—Sir Norton Knatchbull has an admirable *note* here, in which he establishes *the version* I have given by many incontestible authorities even of *ecclesiastical writers*: And though it be true, that *in* some cases (as Dr. Hammond has learnedly shewn,) χειροτονεω signifies to *constitute* or *appoint* to an office, where there could be *no voting* at all, I cannot see any evidence, that the word is so to be interpreted here.

* *Opened*

SECT. XXXII.

went up the river Orontes *to Antioch* in that province; *from whence they had*, by the divine appointment, *been* solemnly *recommended to the grace of God for that work*, *which they had* so vigorously prosecuted, and so happily *accomplished*: (chap. xiii. 2, 3.) They were therefore very desirous, both of rendering a particular account of their ministry there, and also of returning their grateful acknowledgments to the divine providence and grace, to which they owed their safety amidst so many extreme dangers, and their success in such difficult labours.

Acts XIV. 26.

whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled.

27 *And when they were come thither, and had gathered the church together, they related* to the brethren at Antioch *what* great and wonderful things *God had done with* and by *them*, in the whole of their voyage and journey in all the countries through which they had passed; (compare chap. xv. 12. and xxi. 19.) *and* more especially acquainted them with what extraordinary success he had been pleased to bless their ministry among the Heathen, and *how he had opened a door of faith* and hope *to the Gentiles*, who had so long continued in ignorance, idolatry, and misery [e], making the gospel shine into their hearts, and graciously receiving them into the number of his people.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 *And* Providence permitting them, after their long fatigues, to repose themselves a while in that agreeable situation amidst their dear brethren and friends, *they resided there a considerable time with the disciples*, establishing them in their adherence to the gospel, and in a behaviour suitable to their profession of it.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 19 WHO would value himself upon *the applauses of a multitude*, when he sees how soon these changeable inhabitants of Lystra were instigated to assault him *as a malefactor*, whom but a few days before they were ready to adore *as a god*, and how easily they were prevailed upon to exchange the instruments of *sacrifice* for those of *murder! They stone him*, and *drag him out of the city* for

[e] *Opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*] It is certain, *the gospel* was carried by *the apostles*, in this journey, to many celebrated countries, to which it had never before reached; but as on the one hand it is certain, it had been *preached to the Gentiles before*, so on the other, it seems, a groundless conjecture of Mr. Cradock, that in this journey Paul went as far as to Illyricum, [a province in Europe, on the coast of the *Adriatic Sea*,] preaching the gospel, (Rom. xv. 19.) and suffered *all the hardships* to which he refers, 2 Cor. 21, *&c seq.* (See *Crad. Apost. Hist.* p. 88.)

for dead: And who that had seen this lamentable sight would not have concluded, that here *the labours of Paul* were ended, and that henceforward we should hear no more of him in this glorious history? But God, who amidst all their outrage secretly preserved *the flame of life* from being utterly extinguished, interposed miraculously to heal his wounds and bruises, and on a sudden *restored him to perfect health.* Thus could he always have *protected his apostles*, so that, in a literal sense, *not one hair of their heads should have perished;* but it was more suitable to those wise maxims on which he proceeded in the government of the world, to suffer them at length to fall by their enemies, and to *pour out their blood* as a seal of their doctrine, and of the sincerity with which they taught it; nor could *any death* be *more glorious*, or, when taken in its full connection, *any more happy.* SECT. XXXII. Acts XIV. 20.

With pleasure let us trace these holy men in all *the stages* of their undaunted and successful course; *converting* some, *confirming* others, and upon the whole, like their divine Master, *scattering blessings* wherever they come. Let *their exhortation* still have its power with us, to engage our stedfast *continuance in the Christian faith, through* whatever *tribulations* we are called to pass; be the way ever so rugged and painful, let it be enough for us that it leads to *the kingdom of heaven:* Thankfully let us own the divine goodness in *all the assistances* we receive as we pass through it, and particularly in that which all ages derive from *the Christian ministry*, settled in the church by the wise care of its blessed Founder, to be a perpetual blessing to it. May *all the prayers* which are offered for those, who in succeeding generations are *set apart to the work*, in those solemn devotions which usually attend *their ordination* to it, be heard and answered! And may *ministers* and *people* flourish in knowledge and piety, under the constant care of *the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls!* 21 22 23

The success which attended these *two apostles* in their course, and the pleasure with which they *returned to the place* from whence they had so affectionately *been recommended to the grace of God*, may be an encouragement to our prayers and our labours. Whatever *we do* in the advancement of the gospel, let us with these holy men acknowledge, that *God does it by us;* and let us pray, that *the door of faith* may be *opened* so wide, that all the nations of the earth may *enter in, and be saved.* 26 27

SECT.

SECT. XXXIII.

Some Jewish converts urging it as necessary that the Gentile Christians should observe the law of Moses, Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders upon that question; An assembly is called, in which Peter declares on the side of their liberty. Acts XV. 1—11.

Acts XV. 1.

SECT. XXXIII.

Acts XV. 1.

THE conclusion of the last section left Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, where they continued a considerable time. *And* now a circumstance occurred which was the occasion of very considerable consequences in the Christian church there and elsewhere; for *some* persons *who came* thither *from Judea, taught the brethren* in their public and private discourses, insisting with great earnestness, and saying to them in the strongest terms, *That except ye be circumcised according to the manner* prescribed in the law *of Moses,* and become obedient to all the whole system of his precepts, *ye cannot* possibly *be saved* by the gospel; which was intended to make all that are converted to it Jews, and that they could not otherwise be true and genuine Christians.

Acts XV. 1.

AND certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, *and said,* Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 *There being therefore a contention* upon this account at Antioch, where there were several converts from among the Gentiles, to whom this doctrine could not but be very disagreeable; *and no small debate* arising [*on the part*] *of Paul and Barnabas,* who strenuously opposed these Jewish zealots, and maintained *against them,* that Christians converted from other nations were as free from the Mosaic law as if it had never been given at all; the church thought it advisable to get the best satisfaction they could in an affair which affected the liberties and consciences of so many; and for this purpose *they resolved that Paul and Barnabas, and some others of their number, should go up to the apostles*[a] *and elders*

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

a *They resolved that Paul, &c. should go up to the apostles.*] It is generally allowed, that this is the journey to which Paul refers, Gal. ii. 1, 2, when he says, that *he went up by revelation,* which is very consistent with this; for *the church* in sending them might be directed *by a revelation,* made either immediately to Paul, or to some other person, relating to this important affair. Important indeed it was, and necessary that these *Jewish impositions* should be solemnly opposed in time, because a great number of *converts,* that were *zealous for the law,* would eagerly fall in with such a notion, and be ready to contend for the observance of it.——Many of the Christians

SECT. XXXIII.

elders at Jerusalem [b], to know their sentiments, *about this* grand *question.*

Acts XV. 3.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice, and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

They therefore upon his set out from Antioch, and *being brought forward on their journey by* several of *the church* [c], *went through* the countries of *Phœnicia and Samaria*, which lay in their way, *relating* to all their fellow-christians whom they met with in the several towns through which they passed, *the conversion of the Gentiles* [d], by the blessing of God on their labours; *and* by this account *they occasioned great joy to all the brethren.*

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

And being at length *arrived at Jerusalem, they were received* with all due respect *by the* whole *church, and* particularly *by the apostles and elders* who resided there: *And they related* to them *what* great and wonderful *things God had* graciously *done with* and by *them*, and gave them an account of the success with which he had blessed their ministry among the Gentiles, in their late travels through Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia.

5 But there rose up certain

But some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed,

Christians at Antioch undoubtedly knew, that Paul was under an extraordinary *divine direction*, and therefore would readily have acquiesced in his determination alone; but, as others might have prejudices against him, on account of his having been so much concerned with the Gentiles, it was highly expedient to take the concurrent sense and judgment of the *apostles of the circumcision* upon this occasion.

b *And elders at Jerusalem.*] By what authority these have been concluded to be some of the *hundred and twenty* mentioned Acts i. 15, I am yet to learn, notwithstanding what is suggested by Dr. Whitby *in loc.* and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 55.— It seems to me, that any officers of *the church*, to whom the stated *inspection of it* was committed, might properly be called *elders*, whether they were, or were not, of that number.

c *Being brought forward on their journey by the church.*] This is plainly the sense of the word προπεμφθεντες, which is constantly used to express the regard which was shewn to those, who travelled any where to preach the gospel, or to take care of the affairs of the church, whom it was usual to *bring forward on their way.* Compare Acts xx. 38. xxi. 5. Rom. xv. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11. 2 Cor. i. 16. Tit. iii. 13. and 3 John ver. 6.

d *Relating* to all their fellow Christians ——*the conversion of the Gentiles.*] It is surprising that the author of *Miscell. Sacra.* (Essay iv. p. 50, *&c seq.*) and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 49, 50,) should think, Paul and Barnabas told their story in so ambiguous a manner, as to leave room for those that heard them, both here, and at Jerusalem, to conclude, that *the Gentiles* of whom they spake were only *proselytes of the gate* and not *idolatrous Gentiles.* Had the distinction been material, it would no doubt have been inquired into, and though no inquiry had been made, yet it would have been very disingenuous in Paul and Barnabas, when, (as these writers allow) their work had chiefly lain among the *idolatrous Gentiles*, to conceal that circumstance, and leave the *assembly* in general terms to make *a decree* relating to *Christian Gentiles*, in which in fact but a very small part of them should be concerned. But indeed it is most groundless to imagine, that, if the distinction had been ever so great between *proselytes of the gate* and *other Gentiles*, it should in any circumstances, or at any time have been an obnoxious thing, or a thing that should need concealment, that *the true God* had been *preached to idolators.* As for the argument from Gal. ii. 2. I may hereafter give my reasons for concluding, it refers to Paul's teaching, that even *the Jews themselves* were by Christ freed from any general obligation in conscience to observe the Mosaic ceremonies.

e *But*

SECT. XXXIII.

lieved[e], who were still zealous for the ceremonial law, *rose up and said, That* though they heartily rejoiced in the conversion of so many of the heathen to the knowledge and faith of the gospel, yet *it was* absolutely *necessary to circumcise them, and to* instruct and *charge them to keep the* whole *law of Moses*, in its ceremonial as well as moral precepts. Others in the company opposed this, as an innovation of a very unreasonable nature, and as what might be attended with pernicious consequences: And to bring the matter to an issue, it was agreed, that at an appointed time it should be debated at large in a full assembly.

Acts XV. 5.

certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

6 *And* accordingly when the day came, *the apostles and elders were gathered together, to consult upon this affair*, and to consider what was fit to 7 be determined in it. *And after much debate*[f], *Peter rose up* in the assembly, *and said to them, Men* [*and*] *brethren, you* very well *know that some considerable time since*, the ever blessed *God*, who is so remarkably *among us* by many gracious tokens of his presence, *chose*[g] *that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel*[h], *and believe* in that glorious dispensation.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

[e] *But some of the sect of the Pharisees*, &c.] I cannot but wonder with Raphelius, (*ex Herod.* p. 367,) that Beza and some others should think, this is a circumstance which Paul adds to his story, when the connection so evidently shews them to be the words of Luke the historian, informing us, that these messengers found some at Jerusalem, who held the same unhappy principles which had so much disturbed the peace of the church at Antioch. To support the other interpretation Mr. L'Enfant is obliged to make an addition to the text, and render it, *But* [*said they*] *some of the Pharisees*, &c. See *Wolf. Cur. Philol. in loc.*

[f] *After much debate.*] The *debate* which arose in this *assembly* may indeed prove, that there were some in the church at Jerusalem, who had not a due regard to the *authority* of the *apostles*; but it cannot, as many have supposed, afford any just argument against *their inspiration*; for this dispute does not appear to have been among *the apostles themselves*; and, if they really had *debated the case* a while, their decision at last might have been under an unerring direction: And I know not any reason to conclude, that *their inspiration* was always *so instantaneous* and *express*, as to supersede any deliberation in their own minds, or any consultation with each other.

[g] *God among us chose.*] There seems as, Heinsius and many others have observed, something harsh in this expression, to take it as if Peter had said, "God chose me from among us all." The words [*among us*] are wanting in the *Syriac Version*, and some read [*among you*;] but the sense given in the *paraphrase* seems so easy and pertinent, that I see no reason to wish for any authority to change the received reading.

[h] *That the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel.*] It is surprising to me, that the learned authors I have so often mentioned above should argue, that, because the persons to whom Peter first preached the gospel were not *idolaters*, that is, because Cornelius was a worshipper of the true God, (for what *his friends* were, none can certainly say,) therefore *the question* now before this assembly must only be, "Whether *proselytes of the gate* were obliged to observe *the whole law of Moses*?" (See *Miscel. Sacr.* Essay IV. and *Dr. Benson*, Vol. II. chap. 3, § 4, 5, 6.) I see not the force of this argument, since it evidently takes it for granted, both that *the assembly* would know and recollect that they were *proselytes of the gate*, merely from his calling them *Gentiles*, and also that *if-*

8 And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us:

pensation. *And* in proof of this, while I was preaching to Cornelius and his family, who were uncircumcised, that *God who knoweth the heart bare witness to them* that they were accepted by him, by *giving them the Holy Spirit* in a miraculous effusion and a visible appearance, *even as* [*he did*] *to us* at the very begining, on that ever memorable day of Pentecost, which fulfilled our Lord's gracious promise, and furnished us for our great and successful work. SECT. XXXIII. Acts XV. 8.

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

And thus it evidently appeared, that he *made no distinction between us and them, having purified their hearts* as well as ours, *by* a sincere *faith*, and thus sanctified them much more effectually than could have been done by any external rite, and made it manifest that he was ready to admit them to the blessings of his gospel. 9

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Now therefore, my brethren, why do you not acquiesce in such a determination? *Why do you* insist on farther terms as necessary, where the divine will is already sufficiently declared; and go about to *tempt God, by* a proposition of *imposing on the neck of the disciples a* grievous and burthensome *yoke, which neither our fathers nor we have been able* cheerfully and regularly *to bear*, without being exposed to great inconveniencies and many transgressions in consequence of it? 10

11 But we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they.

But far from consenting to what some of you propose, *we* who are sufficiently instructed on this head by our great Master, do fully and assuredly *believe, that we* ourselves *are saved*, not by obedience to the works of the law, but *by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the same manner as they* are: And therefore we cannot consent, that while they have that faith upon which salvation depends, we should urge upon them the observation of those ceremonial precepts of the law, by which we ourselves know we cannot be justified. 11

Thus Peter pleaded, and James afterwards seconding his discourse, the council acquiesced in it, (as we shall presently hear,) only enjoining some easy restrictions, to avoid giving unnecessary offence to their circumcised brethren.

IMPROVE-

circumcision would be judged *more necessary* for *such converts* than for those who had before been *idolaters*; both which suppositions appear to me very unwarrantable. Peter's argument plainly is, "*Circumcision* cannot be necessary for *Gentile converts*, because God by the effusion of *his Spirit* declared his acceptance of *uncircumcised Gentiles* in Cornelius' case:" And this argument will be conclusive, if *Gentiles* be taken in the *most extensive*, which we are sure was the *most usual* sense of the word, that is, for *all who are not*, either by birth, or complete proselytism, *Jews*.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XXXIII. How early did the spirit of *bigotry* and *imposition* begin to work in the Christian church! that fatal humour of *imposing a yoke on the neck of Christ's disciples*, by making indifferent things necessary! An unmanly and antichristian disposition; which has almost ever since been rending the church to pieces, and clamorously throwing the blame on those who have been desirous, on principles truly evangelical, *to stand fast in the liberty with which* their divine Master *hath made them free:* (Gal. v. 1.) How foolish and how mischievous the error, of making *terms of communion* which Christ has never made; and how presumptuous the arrogance of invading his throne, to pronounce from thence *damnatory sentences* on those who will not, who dare not, submit to our uncommissioned and usurped authority.

Ver. 1, 5, 10

6 Prudent undoubtedly was the part which these *Antiochian Christians* acted upon this occasion, in sending these messengers to *the apostles* for their determination: And it will be our prudence, now we can no longer in person consult those *ambassadors of Christ*, to make their writings *the man of our counsel*, and the standard both of our faith and worship; appealing to the tribunal of Christ, our master and our judge, from those *uncharitable censures* which we may sometimes incur even from his faithful though mistaken servants, for retaining *the simplicity* of that religion which these authorised interpreters of his will taught.

3 *Great joy* was occasioned *to the churches* through which Paul and Barnabas passed, when they recounted *the conversion of the heathen:* O that *such joy* may be renewed to us, by the success of all who with a truly apostolic self-denial and zeal go forth at any time to the vast multitudes of *the Gentiles* which yet remain on the face of this uncultivated earth of ours, so great a part of which is yet in a spiritual sense *a wilderness!* Whatever success 4 *they* may have in one part of *our Lord's vineyard*, or *we* in another, let us all remember it is in consequence of *what God* does 7 *by us* and *by them;* and let us adore the riches of divine grace, to which we owe it, that *we are chosen* to make a part of *God's people* ourselves, and to carry the knowledge and power of his gospel to others.

8, 9 May *our hearts* be *purified by* a vital, and not merely enlightened by a notional *faith!* May that *God, who knoweth all hearts, bear* 11 *witness* to us, by *giving us his Holy Spirit*, to *seal us to the day of redemption!* And being under the influence of this sacred agent, animated in the most amiable manner to *adorn our profession*, when we have *done all*, may we humbly repose ourselves upon *the grace*

of

of our Lord Jesus Christ, as knowing that it is only by the rich and free display of it, that after all our labour, obedience, and care, we can *expect salvation.* SECT. XXXIII.

SECT. XXXIV.

The speech of James, in the assembly of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, with their decree in favour of the liberty of Gentile converts. Acts XV. 12—29.

Acts XV. 12. THEN all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Acts XV. 12.

IT was observed in the last section, that a meeting of the apostles and elders was held at Jerusalem, on account of that attempt which the Judaizing Christians had made at Antioch, to bring the believing Gentiles under the yoke of the Mosaic law; and an account was given of that speech in their favour with which Peter had opened it, wherein he recounted the story of Cornelius, and the manner in which he and his friends were admitted into the church, without circumcision, yet with most evident tokens of divine approbation. It was then judged convenient, that they who had been in a peculiar manner the apostles of the Gentiles, should proceed with their narration: *And* accordingly *the whole multitude* which was assembled[a], *kept silence, and attended to Barnabas and Paul*, while they were *relating what great signs and wonders God had done among the heathen by them*, to reclaim them from their idolatries[b]; and with what miraculous operations he had confirmed their method of admitting them into the Christian church, though they never made any effort towards engaging them to be circumcised, and become Jews. SECT. XXXIV. Acts XV. 12.

Then

[a] *The whole multitude.*] I suppose this *whole multitude* is spoken of ver. 22, as *the whole church*; for I cannot enter into the force of those reasons on which the learned Beza concludes, that all that is mentioned from the *sixth* to the *twenty-first verse* passed in *a synod of ministers only*, and was not communicated to the rest of *the church* till afterwards, when they acquiesced in *the letter*, which contained the result of this meeting; ver. 22, *&c. seq.* It seems to me most probable, that it was in one of their worshipping assemblies that Paul and Barnabas had *declared all things that God had done with them*; (ver. 4,) and that now at another, yet more numerous, and held on this particular occasion, they told the story more largely, with an account of particular miracles and other occurrences: And this the word [*multitude*] seems farther to imply. Yet I presume not absolutely to determine the question.

[b] *Done among the heathen by them, to reclaim them from their idolatries.*] For the reasonableness of taking it in this extent, see *note* h, § 33, p. 124.

[c] *James*

SECT. XXXIV.

Acts XV. 13.

Then after they had done speaking, James the son of Alpheus, one of the apostles, *answered*[c], *saying, Men* [*and*] *brethren,* I desire you would attentively *hearken unto me,* while I give you my most deliberate thoughts on this important question. Our beloved brother *Simon* Peter *hath* just *been relating, how God first looked down on the Gentiles* in his abundant mercy, *to take from among them a people for* the honour of *his name,* who should with us be accounted to him for a generation; sending his servant to them in an extraordinary manner, and crowning his labours with such tokens of success, and such characters of divine acceptance, as could leave no doubt as to the regularity of his proceedings; to all which the relations made by our other brethren, Barnabas and Paul, do wonderfully agree. *And,* though this may seem quite contrary to some of our prejudices in favour of our nation and the law of Moses, yet, if we will give ourselves leave impartially to examine and consider, we shall find it by no means incredible; for *the words of the prophet harmonize with this, as it is written,* particularly by Amos, (chap. ix. 11, 12,) "*After this I will return* to my people in mercy, *and will* restore the house and *build up the tabernacle of David* my servant, *which is fallen down*[d]; *yea, I will rebuild its ruins, and set it upright again,* with such strength and glory as shall be observed by all around: *That* not the Jews alone, but all *the remainder of men, may* earnestly

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me.

14 Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the

[c] *James answered.*] It is plain from hence, that the matter was not determined by virtue of any *authority* in Peter; and it seems very providential, that James should have made *such a speech* on this occasion, and that he should have used the expression, κρινω, *I determine,* (ver. 19;) which, had it been found in *Peter's speech,* would have been a much more plausible argument in favour of his weakly boasted *supremacy,* than the whole *Scripture* now affords.——It may not be improper also to observe, that, if Peter had introduced his discourse like that of James, with saying, *Hearken unto me,* it would no doubt have been strenuously pleaded in the same view. They who have interpreted this, as an instance of the authoritative proceedings of *a bishop* in his *own diocese,* have not to be sure sufficiently considered *the difference* between the *apostolical* and *episcopal office,* nor how little pretence any *supposed episcopal power* of James at Jerusalem could give him, to dictate to Peter and his other *brethren,* in deciding a cause, in which the whole *Christian world,* and not only *his own supposed diocese,* was concerned.

[d] *After this I will return,* &c.] These words are quoted from Amos ix. 11, 12, according to the reading of the *Seventy,* who might probably follow a correcter copy of the Hebrew than the present; and Bishop Chandler (of *Christianity,* p. 174,) seems very justly to argue, that the Jews understood and admitted the words in the sense that James quotes them, or they would not have submitted to *his interpretation,* considering how strongly they were prejudiced against the consequence he drew from them.

the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doth all these things.

earnestly *seek the Lord*[e], *even all the heathen* nations *upon whom my name is called,* who in that day shall know my name, and be received into the number of my people, *saith the Lord* Jehovah, *who* by his almighty power, with unfailing faithfulness, *doth all these things.*

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

18 [*Now*] such a prediction is agreeable to the wise and steady plan of the divine government; for *all his works are from eternity* itself *known unto God*[f], whom no unexpected event can ever surprise, but who has fixed his schemes on so perfect and exact a foresight of the most contingent events, that he is never under any necessity of changing them in the minutest circumstance.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.

19 *Wherefore I* cannot but *determine* in my own mind[g], and I doubt not but you will readily concur with me, that we ought *not to disquiet those who from among the Gentiles are converted* by divine grace *to* the knowledge and worship of the true *God*, and to obedience to the gospel[h], with such observances as those now in question;

20 But that we write unto

But only *to write to them, that* 20 *they*

e *That the remainder of men,* &c.] De Dieu has a learned and curious *note* here, to account for the variation of *this quotation* from the *original.* If the ancient reading were, *That they may possess the remnant of Edom,* (which there is room to question, we must suppose with Grotius, Cradock, and others, that, as *the prophets* declared some of the greatest enemies of the church, such as *the Edomites* were, should submit themselves to it, *the apostle* had a right to interpret these words, as in effect declaring, that *all the residue of men,* that is, the whole *Heathen world,* should be converted.—Dr. Sykes (of *Christianity,* p. 294,) very justly refers this to the bringing in *the fulness of the Gentiles* in the latter day; nevertheless, as he there well observes, they would in this view afford a very good argument for admitting in the most candid manner, those of them who were already converted.—— *The Heathen upon whom the name of God is called,* is so proper a description of those that are converted to the true religion, that, when any urge that it must refer to those who were before their conversion to Christianity *worshippers of the true God,* it only shews how much they are distressed for arguments to support an hypothesis. See below, *note* h.

f *All his works are from eternity known unto God.*] It is plain, the *apostle* does not (as some have strangely asserted,) speak of God's works *in the natural world,* which had been nothing at all to his present purpose, but *of his dispensations* towards the children of men. Now he could not *know those,* without knowing the characters and actions of particular persons, on a correspondence to which, the wisdom and goodness of those dispensations is founded. Thus, for instance, he must have known, there would be *Gentile idolaters,* (a thing as dependant on the freedom of the human mind, as any thing we can imagine,) or he could not have known, that he would call them into his church. *This text* therefore must remain an unanswerable proof, amongst a thousand more from the word of God, that he *certainly foreknows future contingencies.*

g *I* cannot but *determine* in my own mind.] This the word κρινω may naturally express, and be taken to imply, *judging in our own mind,* without pretending to impose that judgment on *others.*

h *Those who from among the Gentiles are converted to God.*] It is evident, this description much better suits those, who were now, as it is elsewhere expressed, (1 Thess. i. 9,) *turned from idols to serve the living and true God,* than those who, having had the knowledge and fear of God *before,* were now instructed in what was *peculiar to Christianity.*

i *The*

SECT. XXXIV.

Acts XV. 20.

they abstain from things grossly scandalous, and such as would give greatest offence to their brethren of the circumcision; particularly, *from the* abominable *pollutions of* things sacrificed unto *idols, and fornication, and* [*from*] eating *that* 21 *which is strangled, and* [*from*] *blood*[1]. And though the latter of these have no moral and universal evil in them, yet it is necessary to join the prohibition of them to that of the former; *for* we know that *Moses hath from ancient generations* had, and still continues to have, *those who preach him* and his institutions *in every city, being read in* all *the* Jewish *synagogues every sabbath-day;* and these things are so expressly forbidden in his law, that while the Gentile Christians indulge themselves in any of them, it will be impossible there should be that communion and harmony between them and the Jewish converts, which the honour and edification of the church requires.

unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.

This

[1] *The pollutions of idols, and fornication, and that which is strangled, and blood.*] It is not for *a note* in such a work, to enter into all the difficulties and niceties of *this text*, or the various opinions of *commentators* upon it. Omitting for the present what may be said of *fornication* as mentioned here, which I shall refer to *note s* below, I must declare, that on the whole, the most rational interpretation of the passage seems to be this: That though neither *things sacrificed to idols*, nor the flesh of *strangled animals*, nor *blood*, have, or can have, any *moral evil* in them, which should make the eating of them absolutely and universally unlawful; (compare 1 Cor. viii. 1, 8, 9. Rom. xiv. 14. *& seq.* 1 Tim. iv. 4. Mat. xv. 11,) yet they were here forbidden to the *Gentile converts*, because the Jews had such an aversion to them, that they could not *converse freely* with any who used them. This is plainly the reason which James assigns in the very next words, (ver. 21,) and it is abundantly sufficient. This reason is *now ceased*, and the obligation to abstain from these things ceases with it. But, were we in like circumstances again, *Christian charity* would surely require us to lay ourselves under the same restraints. As for the *hypothesis* which has been so largely proposed by the author of *Miscell. Sacra*, Essay IV. and defended by Dr. Benson, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 58—67,) to which Dr. Hammond's interpretation very nearly approaches, "that *this decree* only related to *such Christians* as had, before they embraced the gospel, been *proselytes of the gate*, and was never intended to include those converted from among the *idolatrous Gentiles*;" besides what has been noted on many passages above, to shew how unreasonable such an interpretation would be, I desire it may be considered farther, that the Jews must as much *scruple to converse* with one who *had been an idolater*, and continued, *after becoming a Christian*, to eat of these *supposed unclean things*, as with one who had *before* been *a worshipper of the true God*, and used them; and consequently that, if *this decree* were to be interpreted under *such a limitation* as these authors propose, it would have been *quite insufficient* for the intended purpose of accommodating affairs between Jewish and Gentile Christians, as nothing would have been done with respect to *those* of the latter who *had been idolaters*, though they were by far the more numerous of the *Gentile converts*.——This will more evidently appear, if the opposite opinion in question be compared with the occasion of enacting this decree. The *Jewish zealots* insisted upon it, *that Gentile believers, should be circumcised.* This council determined, that they should *only observe these necessary things.* Now, as it is certain the demand of *circumcision* was, and would be, made on *all Gentile converts*, and not merely on those *who had known the true God* before they became Christians, these injunctions must be *as extensive* as that demand.——Grotius has a learned and curious *note on this text*, which I could wish might be consulted by those that have opportunity.

k *Judg*

SECT. XXXIV.

Acts XV. 22.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

This advice was very acceptable to the whole assembly, who unanimously declared their approbation of it; *Now then it seemed good to the apostles and elders, and all the church* there met together *to send to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas,* some *chosen men from among themselves,* to add the greater authority to the report made in a matter of so great importance; and the persons they selected on this occasion were *Judas sirnamed Barsabas* [k], *and Silas* [l], who were both *men of principal account among the brethren,* and persons who well deserved the high reputation they possessed.

23 And wrote letters by them after this manner, The apostles and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.

These therefore they dispatched to Antioch, *writing by their hand these things* that follow [m]: "*The apostles, and elders, and* other *brethren* assembled at Jerusalem [n], *send greeting to* all *the brethren* converted to the christian faith *from among the Gentiles,* and particularly to those *in Antioch, and* the other parts of *Syria, and* in the province of *Cilicia.* 23

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye *must* be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

Forasmuch as we have been informed, that some going out from among us, with a pretence that we had sent them forth, *to whom* nevertheless *we gave no commission* to make use of our names [o], *have troubled you with* their *discourses, unsettling your minds* by confidently *saying that* [*you must*] all *be circumcised, and keep* all the precepts of *the law* of Moses, or otherwise you cannot possibly be saved: 24

25 It seemed good unto

We, being unanimously assembled to debate this matter, *have thought proper to send* 25

[k] *Judas sirnamed Barsabas.*] Some have thought, this was the same with *Joseph called Barsabas,* (Acts i. 23.) candidate with Matthias for the apostleship, the son of Alpheus or Cleopas, and brother to at least *two* of the apostles, James now present and Jude; than whom we know not any one person, not an apostle, of greater note in the church at this time. Others suppose that he was *brother* to him. See *Dr. Benson,* Vol. II. p. 55.

[l] *Silas.*] This seems to have been the person elsewhere called *Sylvanus*; (2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. 1 Pet. v. 12.) a most intimate friend and beloved companion of Paul, and as it seems also *a citizen of Rome;* Acts xvi. 37.

[m] *Writing,* &c.] As for the construction of γραψαντες with αποστολους, and some other supposed *solecisms* of this kind, I with pleasure refer the learned reader to Raphelius, *Not. ex. Herod,* p. 370—372. and p. 510—513.

[n] *And other brethren.*] I conclude with Mr. L'Enfant, that these *brethren,* who were neither *apostles* nor *elders,* were *private christians* whom the *apostles* in their great condescension joined with them on this occasion, as well knowing, that their declared concurrence would strengthen their obligation not only to acquiesce in *this decree,* but to support it. And it was the more prudent to do it, as the *liberty* this gave to the *Gentile christians* would something affect the *secular interests* of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

[o] *To whom we gave no commission.*] This was directly *fixing the lye* upon them, if they had pretended to use *the apostles' names* in imposing their tenets; and, as the matter of fact was known, would be a proper means of *weakening their credit,* and so render them less capable of doing mischief.

[p] *They*

SECT. XXXIV.

Acts XV. 25.

send you chosen men of our own body, *with our beloved* brethren *Barnabas and Paul:* Whom, by the way, we highly esteem, as *men that have* courageously, in repeated instances, *exposed* 26 *their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* [p], With them *we have therefore sent* two of our brethren, *Judas and Silas*, the bearers hereof, 27 *who will also tell [you] by word of mouth the same things* that we now write, together with the circumstances of our consultation on this head, which we pass over, as the particular detail of them would carry us beyond the proper bounds of a letter. 28 *For it hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit* [q], and therefore *to us*, who desire in all things to conform ourselves to his sacred direction, *to impose no further burthen* 29 *upon you besides these necessary things* [r]. Namely, *that you abstain from "things offered to idols, and from blood, and from any thing* that is *strangled, and from fornication* [s]: *from which you*

unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul:

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas, and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and

[p] *That have exposed their lives*, &c.] Such a testimony to the reputation of Paul and Barnabas, was far from being a mere compliment, but exceedingly prudent, as it might be the means of *removing the prejudices* conceived against them by the *Jewish converts* or *teachers*, who, as it appears from many passages of the epistles, endeavoured as much as possible to *lessen the character* of these *apostles*. It would also be an useful expression of *the harmony* between them and those of the *circumcision*.

[q] *It hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit.*] This may include the decision which the Spirit had given by his descent on Cornelius and his friends, but seems more directly to express the consciousness which this assembly had of being guided by *his influences* on their minds in their present determination. But it cannot be extended to any ecclesiastical councils, that have not *inspired apostles* to reside, as they did here. See *Bp. Burnet on the Articles*, p. 196.

[r] *These necessary things.*] They were all undoubtedly necessary, in order to promote a free converse between the Jewish and Gentile christians, and especially to secure communion *at the table of the Lord*, where we cannot imagine that Jews would have *eaten* and *drank* with persons, whom they thought in so polluted a state, as those who indulged themselves in the things here prohibited. On the other hand, it seems the Jews on these conditions gave up any farther debate about the rest of *forbidden meats*, as well as *circumcision* and many other articles.

[s] *And from fornication.*] As the infamy of what is commonly called *simple fornication* was not so great among the Gentiles, as the nature of the crime deserved, it has been generally thought, that *the church at Jerusalem* chose to add *this prohibition*, though it might be a kind of digression from the immediate design of their letter to do it. Others interpret the word of *marriage within the degrees of kindred prohibited by the Mosaic law.* (Lev. xviii. 6—18.) Mr. L'Enfant would explain it of *victims offered by prostitutes* out of their scandalous hire; (Deut. xxiii. 18.) which, he says, makes a beautiful sense, and obviates a very considerable difficulty. Heinsius also vindicates this interpretation at large, and shews that Athanasius uses πορνεια for πορνικη θυσια. I pretend not absolutely to determine the question; but think it material to observe, that, if it be taken *in the worst sense* that can be imagined, it cannot prove the universal unlawfulness of *eating blood*, since not only *that* but eating *things sacrificed to idols*, and *strangled*, are joined with *fornication*; and yet we are sure, that neither of them were absolutely evil in themselves, or universally forbidden. (Compare 1 Cor. viii. 1, 8, 9. and the other texts cited above in *note* t on ver. 20.) It is remarkable, that both Irenæus, (*adv. Hær. lib.* iii. *cap.* 12,) and Cyprian, (*Testimon. lib.* iii. *cap.* 119,) in quoting these words add, "And do not to others, what you would not have done unto

and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

you will do well to keep yourselves at the greatest distance that may be t. And so we bid you heartily *Farewell;* wishing you, with the sincerest affection, all peace and prosperity in our common Lord, which in the observation of these directions, you may expect."

SECT. XXXIV.

Acts XV. 29.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us adore the divine condescension in *looking* with pity *upon the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name.* We are *that people;* let it be our concern, that, *as his name is named upon us,* we render it becoming honours, and remember, what an obligation it lays upon us to *depart from iniquity!* (2 Tim. ii. 19.) May *the fallen tabernacle of David* also, in due time be *raised up,* and all *its ruins repaired; that,* when God's ancient people are remembered by him, *the residue of men may seek after the Lord,* and *the fulness of the Gentiles may be brought in!* God who hath *a complete view* of all his schemes, and of *all his works* from the foundation of the world, will accomplish this also in its season. In the mean time, let us gatefully acknowledge what he has already done. Ver. 14

Let us be peculiarly thankful that we are freed from the *burthens* of the *Mosaic institution,* and called to *a law of liberty.* Yet let us take due heed that we do not *abuse it to licentiousness,* Gal. v. 13.) Let us learn from the tenor of *this decree,* tenderly to regard even *the prejudices* of our *christian brethren,* and to be careful that we do not violently *overbear them;* but rather that, so far as honour and conscience will allow, we *become all things to all men,* and be willing in some respects to *deny ourselves,* that we may not give unnecessary offence to others. 16, 17 18 19, 21

Most prudently did *the apostles* determine this affair, under the influence of the *Divine Spirit;* and whatever *hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to them,* let us treat with all becoming regard. —The *messengers* from Antioch, by whom they returned this decree, were persons of an *amiable character* indeed: They had *hazarded* 28 25, 26

unto yourselves." But, as no ancient *version,* or valuable *manuscript,* has this addition, and it seems not to suit the connection in which it stands, I cannot but conclude it the *spurious interpolation* of some, who admired this noble maxim so highly, as to attempt, though in an irregular method, to recommend it to the utmost.

t *From which you will do well to keep yourselves.*] That is, you may hope it will end well. This gentle manner of concluding was worthy the apostolical wisdom and goodness. Too soon did succeeding *councils of inferior authority,* change it for the stile of *anathemas:* forms which have, I doubt not, proved an occasion of consecrating some of the worst passions of the human mind under sacred names, and which, like some ill-adjusted weapons of war, are most likely to hurt the hand from which they are thrown.

SECT. XXXIV.

hazarded their lives in the service of Christ, and joyfully went on to expose them to new dangers; thinking themselves, no doubt, exceeding happy in the *success* of this negociation, as also in the *society* of those pious *brethren of the circumcision*, who accom-
27 panied them in their return with this letter.—May the blessed time come, when the *ministers of Christ* of all denominations, laying aside their mutual animosities, shall agree to *study the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another!* (Rom. xiv. 19.) Then will *liberty and truth* have a more easy and universal triumph, while *love* melts and cements those souls whom *rigorous severity* has only served to harden, to disunite and to alienate.

SECT. XXXV.

The messengers from the assembly at Jerusalem arrive at Antioch, and after continuing there some time, Paul with Silas, and Barnabas with John sirnamed Mark, set out different ways, to visit the churches they had lately planted. Acts XV. 30. *to the end.*

Acts XV. 30.

SECT. XXXV.

Acts XV. 30.

THE reader has been just presented with a copy of that important letter which the apostles, and elders, and church at Jerusalem sent to the Gentile christians, by two of their own body, in conjunction with Paul and Barnabas; *They therefore being* thus *dismissed, came to Antioch, and assembling the* whole *multitude* of the church there, they *delivered the*
31 *epistle* to them: *And when they had read* [*it*] *they* all *rejoiced for the consolation* [*it brought,*] in assuring them, that so venerable an assembly concurred in vindicating their liberty from the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies.

32 *And* at the same time *Judas and Silas*, who were the special messengers from Jerusalem thither, *being prophets also themselves*, (persons of great ability in the knowledge of the scriptures, and eminently qualified for the work of the ministry,) did not only deliver the particular message with which they were charged, but on occasion of such a numerous and solemn auditory, each of them *in a copious discourse exhorted and strengthened the brethren*, most affectionately endeavouring to confirm them in their adherence to that gospel which they had embraced, and pressing them to a conduct answerable to it.

Acts XV. 30. SO when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle.

31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed *them*.

And

33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

And having made some stay there, *they were dismissed with* great respect and most affectionate desires of prosperity and *peace from the brethren* at Antioch, to return *to the apostles* from whom they came; whose friendly care of them the church at Antioch most gratefully acknowledged.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

But Silas, having formed a most intimate and endearing friendship with Paul, *thought proper to continue there* a while longer than his companion Judas, who had come with him from Jerusalem.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Paul also and Barnabas continued with the disciples *at Antioch*[a], and employed their time there in *teaching and preaching the* good *word of the Lord*, in conjunction *with many others also*, that were prophets and teachers (Acts xiii. 1.) who, perceiving the readiness which there was in the people to receive the gospel, were gladly employed in dispensing it.

36 And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again, and visit our brethren, in every city, where we have preached

And after they had continued *some* considerable number of *days* there, *Paul*, whose active spirit was ever forming some new scheme for the advancement of the Christian cause, *said to Barnabas* his beloved associate, *Let us return and visit our brethren in all the cities* where we have been

a *Continued at Antioch.*] It is generally thought, that during this time Peter came to Antioch, and, after having for some time conversed freely with the Gentile Christians, changed his behaviour towards them on the arrival of some *Jewish zealots* from Jerusalem, according to the account we have, Gal. ii. 11, & *seq.* which, if the *first verse* of that *chapter* refer to the *journey to the council* described above, seems indeed to have been the case. Nor do I think *that visit* can be referred to *Paul's second journey* to Jerusalem after his conversion, Acts xi. 30, though Barnabas also attended him then, because it was not till after that journey, that *the gospel of the uncircumcision* was so solemnly *committed to him:* (Acts xiii. 2, 3.) which the *apostles* at Jerusalem acknowledge it to have been at the time spoken of, Gal. ii. 7—9. If it be asked, why Paul in his rebuke to Peter did not cut short all farther arguments, by referring roundly to *the Jerusalem decree* if then made? I answer, he might perhaps do it, though not in that part of his speech, which he mentions in the epistle to the Galatians; yet even there he refers to what Peter himself had laid down as the foundation of *that decree:* (Compare Gal. ii. 16—18. with Acts xv. 11.) And it likewise seems to be intimated, that Peter had gone farther in his condescensions, than *the Jerusalem decree* extended its decision, not only in receiving *the Gentiles* to church-communion, or admitting them to converse with him, but *living after their manner*, as if he had himself been *without the law;* (as Paul himself in proper circumstances used also to do, 1 Cor. ix. 19—21. yet afterwards *dissembling his conduct*, as being solicitous to make a secret of it; whereas Paul, though just at the crisis of *the Jerusalem decree* he had thought it his duty to keep on the reserve, and wave a declaration of his sentiments on this head, lest unnecessary debates, as to the obligation on *believing Jews* to observe the law, should have diverted *the council* from the business then in hand, and have frustrated the purpose of that journey; (Gal. ii. 2.) yet when that point was carried, and he had quitted Jerusalem, used great freedom in declaring his opinion, which was, "Not that the *Mosaic ceremonies* were in conscience to be avoided, but that even *to the Jews themselves* they were *indifferent*, any farther than as the peace and edification of others were concerned." I hope the reader will excuse my digressing to clear up this great difficulty here, which I have not seen elsewhere stated in what I think the fairest light, especially since it is so uncertain, whether I may live to publish the remainder of this *Exposition* on the *Epistles*.

SECT. XXXV.

been, and *in which we have preached the word of the Lord, [that we may enquire] how they do,* and see what is the state of religion among them.

ed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.

Acts XV. 37. *And Barnabas* was heartily willing to fall in with the proposal; yet, notwithstanding what had happened in their former progress, he was so far influenced by his particular affection to his nephew, that he *advised to take along with them John, sirnamed Mark,* who had set out with them

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose sirname was Mark.

38 before. (Chap. xiii. 5.) *But Paul* accounted him not worthy of that honour, and *did not think* it by any means *proper to take with them that person, who,* on some consideration or another which seemed to him not very honourable, *had withdrawn himself from them,* returning back *from Pamphylia,* as was related above, (chap. xiii. 13.) *and went not with them to the* performance of that *work,* into the effects of which they were now going to enquire.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 This was an affair not easy to be accommodated, as each insisted on his own scheme and reasons; *there was therefore* on the whole *a sharp fit of anger* between them [b], *so that they* at last *separated from each other* [c]: *And Barnabas taking Mark along with him, sailed to* his native country of *Cyprus,* where the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus had some time since been converted, and Elymas the sorcerer had been struck with blindness. (Sect. 28.)

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other; and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 *But Paul made choice of* his faithful friend *Silas* for the companion of his travels, *and departed* from Antioch, *being,* as before, (chap. xiii. 3.) *commended to the grace* and blessing *of*

41 *God by the brethren* there. *And he went through Syria and Cilicia,* which was his native country, *confirming* and establishing *the churches* [d] which had been planted in those parts, in their adherence to the Christian faith; and so proceeded on

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria, and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

b *A sharp fit of anger.*] So the word παροξυσμος properly signifies, being *a medical term.* Yet, if I had rendered it by the English word *paroxysm* derived from it, I fear it would have been unintelligible to many readers.

c *They separated from each other.*] Yet it appears, not only that Paul and Barnabas were afterwards *thoroughly reconciled;* (compare 1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. ii. 9;) but also, that John was taken into Paul's favour again, and admitted by him as *a companion in his labours.* (Compare Col. iv. 10; Philem. ver. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11.) It is probable, the exhortations of Barnabas, might concur, with these resentments of Paul, to recover him from his former indolent and timorous disposition. See *note* b on Acts xii. 25, p. 88.

d *Confirming the churches.*] Mr. Cradock (in his *Apost. Hist.* p. 99.) and many others think, that Paul sailed from Cilicia to Crete at this time, and, returning to the *Asiatic Continent* quickly after, left Titus to perfect the settlement of the church there; (Tit. i. 5;) which, if he did, might lead us to suppose *his Epistle* to Titus one of the *first* he wrote; but I may elsewhere give my reasons, why I cannot be of this opinion.

on to Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and other more distant parts, in the manner and with the circumstances which will be related hereafter. SECT. XXXV. Acts XV. 41.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy an office had these good men, to go about from one place to another, *comforting and confirming the souls of their brethren* wherever they came: They had *their present reward* in the pleasure of it, and are now also reaping in the heavenly world the fruits of *their labour of love.* Deliver us, O thou Father of mercies, from *lording it over thine heritage,* and overbearing the consciences and liberties of our brethren, with whatever secular advantages it might be attended; and give us to taste at least something of the generous pleasure of these faithful messengers, though it should be with all their labour and persecutions. Verse 30, 31

While we endeavour to *comfort,* may we be also ready to *exhort* and quicken one another: May Christians animate each other in the work and warfare to which they are called; and may *ministers* remember, how great a part of their work consists in *practical addresses,* to which, like Judas and Silas in the instance before us, they should choose to *digress,* rather than entirely omit them. 32

None can wonder that Paul and Barnabas were desirous to *visit the churches* they had planted; for it is natural for those who have been *spiritual fathers* to have a peculiar affection for *their offspring,* as it also is for *the children which God hath given them* to honour and love those who (as the *apostle* expresses it) *have begotten them in Christ Jesus.* (1 Cor. iv. 15.) Happy is it indeed when *the visits of ministers,* animated by such a spirit, are *improved* to the blessed purposes of advancing the work which divine grace has already begun, and of addressing *cautions* as well as *encouragements* with such affection, wisdom, and zeal, that it may finally appear, *they have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.* (Phil. ii. 16.) 36

It is with sensible regret that we read of *any difference,* and much more of *a sharp contention* arising between Paul and Barnabas, so dear to each other in the bonds both of human and Christian friendship: But we see it arose to some degree of *severity,* in consequence of *a remainder of imperfection* in the temper of the one or the other, yea, probably of both; *they separated* therefore, but it plainly appears that they *did not become enemies:* They *preached the same gospel,* though *in different companies,* each taking *his proper circuit;* and thus *the work of the Lord* was performed *with greater dispatch,* and perhaps *with greater success,* while Mark, who 39, 40

SECT. XXXV. who afterwards appears, as well as Barnabas, to have been restored to the intimate friendship of Paul, was, on the one hand, endeavouring to shew that Barnabas had not *chosen* an unworthy associate; and, on the other hand, Silas, the fellow-labourer and fellow-sufferer of Paul, would take care to behave in such a manner, that *this great apostle* might have no reason to *repent of the preference* which he had given to him.

41 To conclude, we see that both Barnabas and Paul go to *their native country:* Some peculiar *affection to it*, when it is not injurious to the general happiness of mankind, is *natural* and *allowable;* and it is certain we cannot shew *our love to it* in any nobler and more important instance, than by endeavouring to promote the progress and success of *the gospel* in it.

SECT. XXXVI.

Paul and Silas passing through several provinces of the Lesser Asia, and having associated Timothy with them as the companion of their labours, pass over into Europe, and arrive at Macedonia, by the special direction of a divine revelation. Acts XVI. 1—12.

Acts XVI. 1.

SECT. XXXVI. WHEN Paul set out with Silas on his journey, it was observed before that he went through the regions of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches; *and* passing on from thence *he came to Derbe and Lystra*, where he had preached the gospel in his former progress. *And* while he was at Lystra, *behold a certain disciple was there, whose name was Timothy, the son of* one Eunice, *a believing Jewess, but of a Grecian father;* and we mention it as a circumstance worthy of note, because he afterwards became a very considerable person in the church, as well as a faithful and useful friend to the

Acts XVI. 1.

2 apostle. He was an eminently serious and devout young man, who was remarkable for his early piety, having been trained up by his good mother, and his grandmother, whose name was Lois, in an acquaintance with the holy scriptures from his childhood; (2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 15.) and, upon the whole, was one *who had an honourable character given him by* all *the brethren*

3 *in Lystra and Iconium. Him* therefore *Paul*, who had before contracted some intimacy of acquaintance with him, (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.) determined he *would have* to attend him in his progress,

Acts XVI. 1. THEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him;

him; and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek:

progress, and *to go forth* to preach the gospel *with him;* [a] *and* that he might not give an unnecessary offence to the Jews, by appearing so intimate with an uncircumcised person, he *took* him to the place where he dwelt, in order to his more constant attendance upon him, *and circumcised him* with all due solemnity, and before proper witnesses [a], according to the usage of the Jews in those days; which he did, (as was hinted before) not that he thought circumcision in itself necessary, or of any avail to salvation, but *on account of the Jews, who were in those places; for they all knew his father,* and were apprized *that he was a Greek:* They would therefore naturally conclude, that his son had not received the rite of initiation into the Jewish religion, and consequently, looking upon him as a Gentile, would be offended themselves at Paul's intimacy with him, and propagate that offence to others. After this, Paul laid his hands upon him, and set him apart to the ministerial office, conferring upon him extraordinary gifts, (2 Tim. i. 6,) which were attended with prophecies of his eminent future usefulness. (1 Tim. i. 18; iv. 14.)

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles

4 *And as they passed through the* several *cities* of those regions, that peace might be secured among the brethren, and no unnecessary burthen might be laid upon the Gentile converts, *they delivered to their custody* an exact and attested copy of *the decrees* [b], *which were determined* as

a

[a] *And circumcised him.*] In order to judge rightly of *Paul's conduct* in this affair, which some have *censured,* (as they do other things in Christianity,) because they *did not understand it,* we must recollect, that he always *openly avowed,* "that the Gentiles were *free* from the yoke of the *Mosaic ceremonies,* and that the Jews were not to expect *salvation by them;*" and he also taught, "that they were not in conscience obliged to observe them at all, except in cases where *the omission of them* would *give offence:*" But, because his enemies represented him as teaching people *to despise the law of Moses,* and even as *blaspheming it,* he therefore took some opportunities of *conforming to it publicly himself,* to shew how far he was from *condemning it as evil*; an extravagance, into which some *Christian heretics* early ran, and with which *the apostle himself* has been most unjustly charged of late by *a writer too contemptible to be named.* This is *the true key* to his conduct here, and Acts xxi. 21—24. And though, when the *Jewish zealots* would have imposed upon him to *compel* Titus, who was a Greek, to be *circumcised,* even while he was at Jerusalem, he resolutely *refused it;* (Gal. ii. 3—5;) yet here he voluntarily persuaded Timothy to submit to that *rite,* knowing *the omission of it in him,* who was *a Jew by the mother's side,* would have *given offence;* and being the more desirous to *obviate any prejudices* against this excellent youth, whose *early acquaintance* with the *Scriptures of the Old Testament* (2 Tim. iii. 15,) might render him peculiarly capable of *preaching in the synagogues* with advantage, which, had he been *uncircumcised,* would not have been permitted.——Grotius observes, this was probably the beginning of *Luke's acquaintance* with Timothy, though Paul knew him long before. See *note* c, § 32. p. 118.

[b] *They delivered——the decrees.*] The

 author

SECT. XXXVI.

Acts XVI. 5.

a rule for their direction, *by the apostles and elders that were* assembled lately in full council *at Jerusalem. The* several *churches therefore* where they came, being watered by such faithful labourers, and encouraged with so favourable a decision of the grand point in question, *were* much *confirmed in* their adherence to *the* Christian *faith, and increased* more and more *in number daily.*

apostles and elder which were at Jerusa lem.

5 And so were th churches established i the faith, and increase in number daily.

6 *And* with such views and such success *they* cheerfully pursued their journey, and *went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia,* which had never before been visited with the light of the gospel, as the provinces before-mentioned had been; and in their travels through Galatia they were received with such peculiar affection, as if an angel from heaven, or Jesus Christ himself had come among them; and such readiness was shewn to hear the word, that they made a considerable number of most zealous converts. (Compare Gal. iv. 14, 15.) [*And*] after this, *being forbidden by the Holy Spirit* (who at that time had other work for them to do) *to preach the word in* that part of the country which is called the proconsular *Asia*[c] in which Colossæ, 7 Laodicea, and some other cities lay; *When they were come to Mysia,* which was the most western province of the Lesser Asia, and lay on the

6 Now when the had gone throughou Phrygia, and the reg on of Galatia, and wer forbidden of the Hol Ghost to preach th word in Asia,

7 After they we come to Mysia, th assay

author of *Miscell. Sacra.* (Essay IV. p. 34,) first taking it for granted, that the *decree* was particularly intended for the churches of Syria and Cilicia, and not for any converts from the *idolatrous Gentiles,* would have *this verse* and the *next* transposed to the conclusion of the *foregoing chapter,* or the *three* intermediate *verses* that begin *this chapter* inclosed in *a parenthesis.* But it is plain from the contents of that *decree,* that it was intended for *all* Gentile Christians living among Jews; and it appears from the preceding story, that *great numbers of Jews* were to be found in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and the neighbouring places; and therefore, as *the transposition* would be most unwarrantable, the *parenthesis* is quite unnecessary, and would pervert the sense.——Mr. L'Enfant observes, that the word δογματα, which is here used to express *decrees,* always signifies something *temporary* and *ceremonial,* and not laws of perpetual and universal obligation. Compare Eph. ii. 15; Col. ii. 14.

c *Forbidden to preach in* that——called the Proconsular *Asia.*] As all the places mentioned in the former *verses* lay in Asia Minor, it is evident that the word *A* must be thus explained. It is also app rent, that flourishing *churches* were aft wards planted there, particularly at C lossæ, Laodicea, Sardis, Thyatira, a Philudelphia: So that it seems to ha been the determination of Providenc that instead of going through this regi now by such a leisurely progress as th in which they proceeded in their form journey through Pamphylia, Pisidia, L caonia, &c. they should hasten to Euro directly, and *preach the gospel* first in Pl lippi which was *a Roman colony,* and th in the neighbouring parts; while in t mean time the *Asian provinces,* now pa ed over, might hear some report of from their neighbours, and so be prepar to receive with greater advantage the bours of the *apostles,* when they should t turn to them, as Paul afterwards d (Chap. xviii. 23, *& seq.*) By this mea *the spread of the gospel* would in any giv time be *wider,* than (other circumstanc being equal,) it would have been, h they taken all the interjacent places their way.

d]

assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

the coast of the Ægean sea, *they attempted* to turn northward, and *to go to Bithynia*, that they might visit the flourishing cities of Nice, Nicomedia, and Chalcedon, and so pass into Europe by the streights of the Euxine sea; *but the spirit* [*of Jesus* [d]] let them know that it *did not permit them* to do it. SECT. XXXVI. Acts XVI. 7.

8 And they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

8 *And* therefore *passing by* the northern borders of *Mysia*, without visiting many places there, *they went down to Troas*, which lay on the shore of the Ægean sea, near the ruins of ancient Troy, so celebrated in history and poetry.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night, There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

9 *And* while they were here, undetermined to what coast of Europe they should sail, if according to their intention they crossed the sea, *a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a certain* man before him, whom he perceived to be a *Macedonian* [e], *intreating him, and saying* with great earnestness, We beseech you to *come over* the sea *to Macedonia, and help us*; for we stand in great need of your assistance, and shall joyfully receive you.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

10 *And* this is a circumstance which the author of this book well remembers, for he attended Paul in this journey, and can relate what follows from his own knowledge; *As soon* then *as he had seen this vision* and declared it to us, *we immediately* agreed, that it was to be regarded; and accordingly we *endeavoured to go out* from the port of Troas, where we then lay, *to Macedonia* [f]; *assuredly inferring* from this vision, *that*

d *The Spirit* [*of Jesus.*] So many ancient *versions*, *readings*, and *citations*, add the words [*of Jesus,*] that I thought myself not only authorised, but obliged, at least to insert them thus, and perhaps might well have omitted the *crotchets*. See *Beza* and *Dr. Mills in loc.*

e *A certain Macedonian.*] Some think, Paul knew his country by his dress or language, or by his *naming it*, as we find he did. Yet perhaps the word τις may intimate, that it was *some particular person* whom Paul knew; for which reason I render it literally, and wonder that Grotius should explain it, as if it were *the guardian angel* of Macedonia that now appeared.

f *We immediately endeavoured*, &c.] This is the *first place*, in which Luke intimates his attending on *the apostles*; and it is very remarkable, that *here* he does it *in an oblique manner*; nor does he indeed, throughout *the whole history*, once mention *his own name*, or relate any one thing which *he said* or *did* for the service of Christianity, though Paul speaks of him in most honourable terms, Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; and probably 2 Cor. viii. 18, *as the brother, whose praise in the gospel* went *through all the churches.*——

The same remark may be made on the rest of the *sacred historians*, who every one of them shew the like amiable modesty; nor is the charming story, St. John tells of himself, (John xxi. 20, *& seq.*) by any means an exception: See *note* [d] on that passage, Vol. VII. p. 476. And when Paul speaks of *his own services*, it is by no means in an ostentatious way, but in his own necessary vindication, appealing to his enemies for the known truth of them. By which means Providence has so ordered it, that the memory of many important facts which would otherwise have been lost, should be preserved; and preserved in such a manner, as to carry the strongest

SECT. XXXVI.

Acts XVI. 11.

that the Lord Jesus himself *called us to preach the gospel to them. Setting sail therefore from Troas*, with the advantage of a strong easterly wind, *we ran directly to* the island of *Samothracia*, which lies near the Hellespont; *and* having thus dispatched the larger part of our little voyage, we came *the next day to* the celebrated port of *Neapolis*, on the Thracian shore, near the borders of Macedonia: *And* landing there, we came *from thence to Philippi, which is a city of the first part of Macedonia*[g]; for it is well known, that the province is divided into four parts, [*and*] this is *a* Roman *colony*[h]; *And we continued in this city for some days*, and met with several remarkable occurrences, which we shall relate in the next section.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis:

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 3 LET us with pleasure observe the prudent condescension of the apostle Paul, *in becoming all things to all men*, and particularly *to the Jews as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews*; (1 Cor. ix. 20,) for this purpose *circumcising* his companion Timothy, that he might give them no unnecessary offence: Nor was the condescension and zeal of *this pious youth* to be less esteemed, who was *willing to submit*, not only to that painful rite, but to all the yoke of ceremonial observances to which he was obliged by it, in a view to *usefulness in the church*: Well may it expect eminent service from *those ministers* of the rising generation, that set out with *such a spirit*; while, on the other hand, when *a fierce and haughty sense of liberty* is the reigning, darling character, and a determination is formed *to submit in nothing, to oblige in nothing*, as the first elements of the *Christian temper* seem as yet to be unknown

evidence along with them. Such instances of *divine wisdom*, occurring in *Scripture*, are worthy our attentive observation, and our thankful acknowledgment.

g *A city of the first part of Macedonia.*] As Amphipolis is mentioned by Livy, (*lib.* xlv. *cap.* 29,) as *the chief city* of this *first region* of Macedonia, in which Philippi lay, I chuse with Mr. Pierce (*Pref.* to his *Notes* on *Phil.*) to follow the Syriac here, as Chrysostom also does, reading πρώτης instead of πρώτη της, though it be true, as Mr. Biscoe well observes, (Chap. x. § 2, p. 367, 368,) that Amphipolis was then on the decline. Raphelius (*ex Herod.* p. 374,) supposes it may signify only, it was *the first city* they met with in their journey; but the authorities he produces seem by no means satisfactory. Grotius explains it of *the first city* that was a *colony*.

h *A colony.*] Luke by using a word originally Latin, αποικων, instead of the correspondent Greek word, αποικια, plainly intimates it was *a Roman colony*, which ver. 21 certainly proves it to have been; and, though the *critics* were long puzzled to find any mention of it in that view, some *coins* (dug up, I think, within the last century,) shew that *a colony* was planted there by Julius Cæsar, and afterwards much augmented by Augustus. See *Spanheim. de Usu & Præst. Numism. Diss.* ii. p. 105, 106, and *Dr. Benson*, Vol. II. p. 14.

unknown, there is great reason to believe, that the doctrines and precepts of the gospel will not, cannot be successfully taught; great reason to fear, that such instructors will *have their reward* in the empty applauses which they give to themselves and each other; while they brand those who are solicitous *to become wise that they may win souls*, with reproaches which God will remember *in the day when he shall judge the secrets of all hearts*, and will find many of them far different from what such rash men have presumed to pronounce them. SECT. XXXVI. Ver.

Indefatigable were *the journeys* and *labours* of these *ambassadors of Christ*; they travelled through wide extended regions, and *sowed the seeds* of knowledge and of life wherever they came, and *God gave the increase*. But the œconomy of divine providence was very remarkable, in *not permitting them to preach in Bithynia*, and *forbidding them* to do it in Asia: What were the particular reasons of this determination we know not; perhaps the inhabitants of these places were remarkably *conceited of their own wisdom*; perhaps they had treated the flying reports of the gospel *with contempt*; or, possibly, without any particular displeasure against them, their visitation might be delayed in a view to *more general good*. But happy was it for Galatia, Phrygia, and the neighbouring parts that they were not included in the prohibition? And happy is it for *this sinful land* of ours, that the *abused, insulted gospel*, is *not taken away*, and that *its ministers* are not one way or another *forbidden to repeat those offers*, which have so long been rejected and despised. 4, 5,— 6, 8 6, 7

The visit of *a Macedonian* imploring the *help of the apostle*, was justly regarded by him and his associates as an intimation of the *divine pleasure* that they should *pass over thither*. And surely did *those nations of the earth*, that have not yet received the gospel, know in the general how great a blessing it is, instead of *opposing* those messengers of it who might offer to spread it among them, they would rather in the most pressing manner *urge* and *intreat their presence*, and with the greatest joy sit down at their feet. May they who are entrusted with *this glorious embassy* imitate the *pious zeal* of these holy men, and be willing, when called by providence, to *cross lands and seas* on so pious and so charitable an errand. 9, 10 11, 12

SECT.

SECT. XXXVII.

Paul and Silas preach the gospel at Philippi, but some of the inhabitants, provoked at their casting out a spirit of divination *from a damsel there, rise tumultuously upon them, scourge them, and cast them into prison. The jailor is awakened by an earthquake, and* converted *by the preaching of Paul.* Acts XVI. 13—34.

Acts XVI. 13.

SECT. XXXVII.

IT was observed in the close of the preceding section, that Paul and Silas, in company with Timothy and Luke, the penman of this history, arrived at Philippi, and made some stay there. *And* now we go on to relate, that *on the sabbath-day we went out of the city to the side of the river* Strymon, *where, according to* the *custom* of the Jews, *there was an oratory* or a place of public prayer[a]; *and sitting down,* when the devotions were over, *we spake to the women that were assembled there,* for most of the congregation were of that sex.

Acts XVI. 13.

14 *And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple,* who was a native *of the city of Thyatira* in Asia, and *a* devout *worshipper of* the true *God* after the Jewish manner, was present at that time and *heard the* [*discourse;*] *whose heart the Lord opened,* by the secret and gentle influences of his grace, *to attend* in such a manner *to the things which were spoken by Paul,* as to be effectually wrought upon and converted by them.

15 *And when she was baptized with her family, she* earnestly *intreated us, saying, If you have judged me*

Acts XVI. 13.

AND on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted *thither.*

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us:* whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her houshold, she besought *us,*

a *Where according to custom there was an oratory.*] The *original* words are remarkable, and much controverted, *ου νομιζετο προσευχη ειναι.* Bos would prove *νομιζετο* a mere *expletive,* and only renders it *Where the oratory was:* (Bos *Exercit.* p. 81——83.) But I think with Elsner, that his authorities do not fully answer. Mr. Mede renders it, *Where the law permitted the Jews to have an oratory;* and the *translation* of 1727, *Where they were allowed to have it.* But as the word generally refers to *custom,* and as it is certain that the Jews had *a custom* of building *their oratories* or *proseuchas,* or places of public prayer, *by the sea-side,* or *near rivers,* for the sake of *purifications,* (which were practised also by the Heathen before solemn devotions; see Isa. lvii. 5, 6) I have found no reason to recede from *the version* I have given before, Luke vi. 12, (see *note* b on that text, Vol. VI. p. 280) and with pleasure refer my reader to the admirable *critic* mentioned above, for the abundant vindication of it, and for a beautiful explication of the phrase *jurare per Anchialum,* which he supposes to refer to this *Jewish custom.* (See *Elsner Observ.* Vol. I. p. 430—434, and *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Book I. chap. 3, § 3, Vol. I. p. 235—240.) I have chosen the word *oratory,* rather than *proseucha,* as more familiar to an English ear, and refer my reader to *Philo, Oper.* p. 752, 753, and 760, to *Dr. Hammond* and *Drusius in loc.* to *Dr. Benson's History,* Vol. II. p 85, 86, and especially to *Dr. Prideaux's Connection,* Vol. I. p. 387—389, for a farther account of these places.

SECT. XXXVII.

Acts XVI. 15

us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

me to be faithful to the Lord Jesus in the profession I have made, and really esteem me a sincere Christian, I beg that you would *enter into my house, and continue* to make your abode [*there*] as long as you stay in this city. *And* she was so extremely pressing and importunate, that *she* even *compelled us* to comply with her proposal.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

Now, while we continued her guests, *it came to pass that as we were* one day *going to the oratory* or praying place mentioned before, *we were met by a certain girl, who had* been for some time under the influence of what the Greeks call *a Pythonic spirit*, that is, a spirit of divination[b], which they suppose to be an inspiration from Apollo, whom they call Pythius[c]: And though she were but a slave, she was a person well known in the city, and one *who brought her owners much gain by her* pretended *prophesying*. 16

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

And following after Paul and us, when (as was said above) we were going to the worshipping assembly, *she cried out, saying* with great earnestness of voice and gesture, *These men are the servants of the most high God, who declare unto you the* only true *way of salvation.* 17

18 And this she did many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command

And this she did for several succeeding *days; but* at length *Paul, being* wearied with so tedious a circumstance, and *grieved* under an apprehension 18

b *A certain girl who had a Pythonic spirit.*] As Plutarch (*De Defect. Orac.* p. 414,) tells us, those who were inspired with this spirit were ἐγγαστριμυθοι, or spake as seeming to *send the voice from their bellies*, and Galen mentions the same fact, some late writers have supposed, the whole pretence to *such inspiration* to have been founded on the art of *throwing out the voice* in some extraordinary manner, which has been practised by some of late among ourselves, and that *all the cure* wrought by the *apostle* was only discovering the cheat, and *disabling her from playing this trick any more.* (See the *Enquiry into the Case of Demoniacs*, p. 54.) And Mr. L'Enfant seems to favour this notion, though he says, in terms of remarkable ambiguity, "it was *an imposture* which must be the work of *a malignant spirit*;" as also Dr. Benson, who calls her "*a lunatic person* who was reckoned by the people to be possessed," &c. (*Hist.* Vol. III. p. 87.) But the manner in which Luke relates the story plainly implies, that *he* thought it *a real possession*, and that Paul took it himself in that view. Nor can I apprehend that her *behaviour*, or *his*, or that of *her masters* afterwards, can be accounted for without allowing it to have been the case. (See *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 2, p. 294—300. *Essay towards Vind. lit. Sense of the Dæmon*, p. 67—70. *Farther Enquiry* p. 84—90. *Reply to it*, p. 79—82.) It is well known, that the Hebrews call *the spirit*, with which such persons were supposed to be agitated, אוֹב, *Ob*, because *the bodies* of those who appeared to be possessed by them were *violently distended*, like *leathern bottles* full of wine, and *ready to burst*. Compare Job xxxii. 18, 19.

c Apollo, whom they call Pythius.] This title, it is generally said, was given to Apollo, on account of his having destroyed a monstrous *serpent*, that was called *Python*: (See *Erasmus, Gualtperius*, and *Le Clerc's Supplement to Dr. Hammond in loc.*) But it seems rather, that this story of the *Python* was a fable grounded on his killing one, who for his cruelty was sirnamed *Python*, that is, *serpent* or *dragon*, from whence Apollo had the name of *Pythius*. See *Strab. Geogr. lib.* ix. p. 291. *Bochart. Hierlz.* Part II. *lib.* 3. *cap.* 5. and *Mr. Biscoe*, as above, chap. viii. § 2, p. 294.

SECT. XXXVII.

Acts XVI. 18.

sion that this stratagem of Satan might lead the people to imagine, that the preachers of the gospel acted in a confederacy with the evil spirit, to whom the heathen worship was addressed, *turned* towards the damsel, who was then very near him, *and said to the* evil *spirit*, by whose emotion she spake, *I charge thee*, O thou invisible power, under whose influence this unhappy creature is, *in the name of Jesus Christ* whose gospel I preach, *to go out of her* immediately. *And it went out that very hour*, so that she had never such kind of supernatural agitations any more, nor pretended to any gift of prophecy for the future.

command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 *But when her owners saw that the hope of their gain was gone* out with the evil spirit, *laying hold of Paul and Silas*, whom they looked upon as much more considerable than Timothy, and Luke, the two evangelists that attended them, *they dragged them* away *to the market place*, to accuse them *to the magistrates*[d], who held their court there. *And having brought them* thither *to the officers* intrusted with the government of the city by the Romans, *they* charged them as disturbers of the peace, and introducers of a new religion that was inconsistent with the laws, and *said*, *These men being Jews, disturb our city*, in an insufferable manner, *And* take upon them in an unwarrantable way to *teach customs which it is not lawful for us, as we are Romans, to receive and observe*[e]; being such as would lead us to renounce the Gods of our country, and to abstain from many things which the laws of Rome require. *And the populace rose up together against them*, and joined the cry, as if they

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the market-place, unto the rulers.

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against

d *To the magistrates.*] Though the *Syriac* and *Arabic Versions* omit those words, the most authentic *copies* insert them. These *magistrates* are here called ἀρχοντες, and afterwards στρατηγοι; the *latter* of which words the Greeks used to denote *Roman prætors*; and if it were applied to the *duumviri*, who were the *governors of colonies*, it was by way of compliment: But Mr. Biscoe has well proved, there are examples of such an application. *Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 3, p. 346.

e *Teach customs, which it is not lawful*, &c.] The masters of this girl had not only *lost all the gain* they might have made by her practice of the arts she professed, but likewise *what they might have sold her for*, in consequence of those extraordinary qualities which were now ceased. Yet, as *the laws* made no provision for an event of this kind, they thought it proper to ground *their accusation* on an attempt *to introduce a new religion*, which was indeed forbidden by the *Roman Law*, (*Cicero de Leg. lib.* ii. *cap.* 8, 10, 14, 27; *Liv. lib.* xxxix *cap.* 16; *Sueton. August. cap.* 93,) though every one was *tolerated* in worshipping what deities he pleased at home. (See *Mr. Biscoe*, chap. ix. § 2, p. 334. *Grotius*, and *Dr. Whitby in loc.*) The conquered provinces were left at full liberty in this respect; yea, and the Romans themselves were sometimes *severely punished*, by their generals or other magistrates, for insulting places, or rites, or even animals accounted sacred.

f *And*

against them, and the magistrates, for their crimes, and commanded to be beaten.

they had been guilty of the worst of crimes. *And* upon this *the officers*, [f] whose duty it was, immediately gave orders that they should be punished. And having [g] *torn off their garments*, it should seem in a most barbarous manner, as it is usual to do in such cases, they commanded that they should be beaten with rods. Compare 1 Thess. ii. 2. and 2 Cor. xi. 23, 25.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely.

And when they had given them many stripes, and *had severely scourged them*, the officers were so incensed against them, that they *cast them into prison*, *charging the jailor to keep them* as safely as possible, and among their barbarous threats any rescue should be attempted: 23

24 Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

He having received such a strict charge from persons of so great rank, *thrust them into the inner prison*, and *secured their feet in the stocks* [h], that they might not be able by any means to escape: and such was the fierceness of his temper, that a command of this kind would be no way disagreeable to him. 24

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: And the prisoners heard them.

But at midnight Paul and Silas, being kept awake by the painful circumstances in which they were placed, sought their relief in devotion: and *having prayed*, they also *sung an hymn to God*, praising him for the honour they had of suffering in his cause, and for the support he gave them under those sufferings; *And the* other *prisoners heard them*, with surprize at that serenity and chearfulness which they discovered in the midst of so many calamities. 25

26 And suddenly there

And on a sudden, while they were thus engaged, *there was a great earthquake*, so *that the* 26

very

[f] *And the officers.*] De Dieu supposes indeed, that the ραβδοῦχοι or *magistrates* mentioned ver. 19. were the *civil rulers* and the στρατηγοὶ spoken of here were *military officers*, to whom the former sent them to execute their sentence. But the contrary is plain from ver. 19. compared with ver. 35. & *seq.* and especially with ver. 37. where Paul insists on their being *uncondemned*.

[g] *Tearing off their garments.*] It is well known, this was the Roman method of proceeding in such cases. (See *Mr. Biscoe*, chap. ix. § 4. p. 347. *Grotius* and *Dr. Whithy in loc.*) De Dieu shews from the *Mischna*, that it was also practised among the Jews; but that was not regarded in the present case.

[h] *Secured their feet in the stocks.*] It is generally supposed, that these were the cippi, or large pieces of wood, used among the Romans, which not only loaded the legs of prisoners, but sometimes distended them in a very painful manner. (See *Grotius in loc. Mr. Biscoe*, chap. ix. § 5. p. 348. and *Roman Obsery.* Vol. I. p. 439, 440.) So that it is highly probable, the situation of Paul and Silas here might be much more painful, than that of an offender *sitting in the stocks*, among us, especially if (which is very possible,) they lay with their *bare backs* so lately scourged on the hard or dirty ground, which renders their joyful frame expressed by *songs of praise* so much the more remarkable. Beza explains it of the *nervellæ*, in which both the feet and the neck were fastened in the most uneasy posture that can well be imagined.

[i] *There*

SECT. XXXVII.

Acts XVI. 26.

very *foundation of the prison was shaken*; God thereby testifying his gracious regard to them, as the faithful ambassadors of his Son, who for his sake were used in so outrageous a manner; *and immediately* by the force of the earthquake *all the doors were opened, and the bonds of all* the prisoners *were* at the same moment miraculously *loosened*[i] yet their spirits were impressed with such astonishment that none of them attempted to flee away.

there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: And immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

27 *And the jailor awakening out of his sleep* upon this violent concussion of the earth, *and seeing the doors of the prison opened,* was in such consternation that he *drew his sword, and was going to kill himself*[k] naturally *supposing, that the prisoners,* embracing so favourable an opportunity, *were fled,* and fearing lest their escape should be imputed to his connivance and treachery, and he should be proceeded against with the utmost severity, and be brought out to a painful and ignominious execution.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 *But Paul,* being aware of that horrid act which his rashness intended[l], and anxious to prevent it, *cried out with a loud voice,* and with the utmost earnestness, *saying,* Stay thy desperate hand, and *do thyself no harm: for we are all here,* and none of us shall take the opportunity of escaping, while the hand of God is working thus awfully around us.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.

29 *And* upon this *he called for lights,*[m] *and* eagerly *sprang in* with a violent and impetuous motion; *and being in a* perfect *tremor,* he *fell down* with the humblest reverence *before* the feet of *Paul and Silas,* and lay a few moments in speechless

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas;

i *There was a great earthquake——the doors were opened,——and the bonds loosened.*] Elsner has most happily shewn, in his *notes* on this text, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 441—444.) that each of these *three* things was esteemed, even by the Pagans, a token of *some divine appearance* in favour of the oppressed and afflicted, who suffered wrongfully, and were dear to them.

k *Drew his sword, and was going to kill himself.*] Though it is true, that some of the *philosophers* condemned *self-murder,* yet it was not only justified by many others, (see *Grotius in loc.* and Mr. *Biscoe,* chap. ix. § 6. p. 340.) but had in fact prevailed much among the Romans, especially about that time, and had, in the memory of some then living, been (as it were) dignified at Philippi by the example of those great men, Brutus and Cassius among others, who *fell on their own swords* there.

l *Paul,* being aware of that horrid act, &c.] As they were all at present *in the dark,* it is not easy to say, how Paul knew of the *jailor's* purpose, unless it were by *hearing some desperate words* that declared it, or by some immediate *suggestion from God,* which amidst such a scene of wonders is by no means incredible.

m *He called for lights.* As φῶτα is the *plural number,* it seems to imply, that on this alarm *several of his attendants* came with torches, and were present at the enquiry which immediately followed; nor did he in the least scruple to throw himself down, *before all his domestics,* at the feet of these his holy prisoners, who were so evidently honoured by the God of nature.

n *What*

SECT. XXXVII.

Acts XVI. 30

30 And brought them out, and said Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

speechless consternation and confusion: *And* then, in the most respectful manner *bringing them out* from the inner prison in which they were confined, *he said*, *O sirs, what must I do that I may be saved*;n for I see nothing but danger and misery, both temporal and spiritual surrounding me?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And they said to him, answering together as with one voice, *Believe in* the name of *the Lord Jesus Christ*o; whom it is our office to preach as the great and only Saviour, and humbly commit thyself to his almighty protection, *and thou shalt be saved* from every evil, *and thine house* too, if they also believe p. *And* as he discovered a most humble desire to be farther instructed in the faith which they taught, *they* readily embraced the happy opportunity, and *spake to him and to all that were in his house, the word of the Lord*, declaring the contents and purport of the gospel. 31 32

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the

And the word came with such a power, that his 33

n *What must I do that I may be saved?*] Grotius thinks, that in this enquiry *the jailor* went upon the natural principles of the immortality of the soul. Dr. Whitby, with much greater propriety, supposes that he spake thus to them, as referring to the testimony of the *Pythoness*, (ver. 17.) which had been so often and so publicly repeated, *that these servants of the most high God taught the way of salvation.* I apprehend the sense of what he says to be very extensive, as if he should have asked, "What methods shall I take for my security?" Probably a vast multitude of ideas rushed into his mind at once. He saw *by the earthquake* the power and displeasure of God; and together with this, the sweetness and joy of Paul and Silas in their bonds, their willing continuance in prison, when they might so easily have escaped, and their generous solicitude for the life of one who had used them so ill, were all *circumstances* fit to strike powerfully on a mind so passionate as his seems to have been, and might all do their part toward convincing him, that *these men* were indeed *divine messengers*, and that the *divine displeasure* was falling on the city, and particularly on *himself*, for persecuting them. Perhaps, some *kind* and *pious words* which Paul and Silas, who took all opportunities of doing good, might have uttered while he was *fastening their feet in the stocks*, might throw farther light on his mind, when recollected amidst such extremity of danger; and no doubt, *the Spirit of God* added conviction and energy to all.

o *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.*] To *believe in Christ* does undoubtedly in its primary signification imply, *trusting in him*, or committing ourselves to his protection, as I have here *paraphrased it.* (See *Dr. Watts's Harmony of all Relig.* chap. viii. p. 65.) In this connection it would immediately imply, submitting to the farther instructions of these his special ambassadors, and authorized messengers: and it always includes a desire to be delivered from the power of sin, and a disposition to comply with his scheme of salvation, which is *to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works:* The full import of which scheme Paul and Silas would not fail to open to this new convert as soon as possible; and accordingly it is presently added, that *they spake to him the word of the Lord.*

p *Thou shalt be saved, and thine house.*] The meaning cannot be, that the *eternal salvation of his family* could be secured by his faith, but that *his believing in Christ*, would be the best security of his family from *present danger*, and that, if they also themselves believed, they would be entitled to the same spiritual and everlasting blessings with himself; which Paul might the rather add, as it is probable, that *many of them*, under this terrible alarm, might have attended the master of the family into the dungeon.

SECT. XXXVII.

Acts XVI. 33 his rough heart was melted at these gracious tidings, and the tenderness of it immediately flowed forth toward these messengers of them, so that *taking them that very hour of the night, he washed their stripes,* which still remained unhealed, *and was immediately baptized, himself and all his* domestics with him.[r] *And having brought them into his house,* after this solemn rite had been performed, *he spread the table before them* with the best provisions he had at hand; *and believing in God with all his house, he was* even *transported with* unutterable *joy,* at the sudden light which had sprung in upon him, and at the happy prospects which were by divine grace presented to his view as a christian.

34

the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.

IMPROVEMENT

Ver. 14 We see remarkably in this period by what *various methods* divine grace operates upon different persons. As for Lydia, she was touched *by a gentle influence,* descending upon her like *dew* from heaven; *her heart* was *melted* under the word, as snow by the sun, and by the *soft,* yet *powerful hand* of our blessed Saviour, was *made willing* and obedient. But when *the Lord* came 24 to subdue *the stubborn heart* of the savage *jailor,* who seems to have taken a barbarous pleasure in *afflicting his pious prisoners,* he came *in the whirlwind, the tempest,* and *the fire.* (1 Kings xix. 26, 27 11, 12.) His soul, as well as his house, was *shaken with an earthquake,* and *the foundations* as it were *laid bare.* A sudden trans- 28 port of *astonishment* convinces him of his extreme danger. *His hand* is mercifully *stopped* in that terrible moment in which he was rushing on to *seek a refuge in hell* from the seeming dangers of earth; and being taught *by a secret grace* which he had not as 29 yet been instructed to seek, *he falls down before Paul and Silas,* honouring

q *He washed their stripes,* which still remained unhealed.] I mention this circumstance, as it serves to shew, what I have elsewhere observed, (and it is of great importance to remember it,) that the *apostles* had not a power of *working miraculous cures* whenever they pleased; no, not even on their own bodies, or those of their dearest friends. (See *note* d, § 17. p. 22.) Had they possessed *such a power,* it would have been their duty to have *used it,* unless they had, (as Christ with such a power in fact had,) a discovery of the *divine will,* that in such or such instances *the use of it* should be *waved.* On the other hand, *the continual use* of such a power would have frustrated many of those noble purposes in providence, which their sufferings answered, and would have introduced *many inconveniences,* which an intelligent reader will easily apprehend from this general hint.

r *And was immediately baptized, himself and all his.*] His being thus *baptized with his household* seems to be the only reason which the *Greek commentators* had, to think *this jailor's name* was *Stephanas,* and that he is the person referred to, 1 Cor. i. 16. xvi. 15, 17. But it is much more probable, that Stephanas was a Corinthian, from all the places here cited.

honouring them as among *the first of mankind*, whom he had just before treated, not only as *slaves*, but as the *worst of villains*; yet he is now ready *to receive the law* and the gospel *from their mouth*, seeking *the way of salvation* from them, and declaring *his readiness to submit* to whatsoever they should tell him. SECT. XXXVII.

What unutterable *delight* must it afford to these afflicted *servants of Christ*, when they saw *this astonishing change!* Surely it appeared that *their prayers* and *their praises* came up *in remembrance before God*. They had, with a serene conscience and a joyful heart, been *singing praises to God in the stocks*, and behold, *new matter of praise* is given them, and in the midst of all their sufferings *new songs* are put into their mouth, and *new occasions for thanksgiving* pour in upon them. *Those bonds* which, however *ponderous* in themselves, sat so light upon them, are now *miraculously loosened*; and the far more infamous and dangerous *bonds* which Satan had fastened upon these sons of persecution and violence, *fall off* too. The awakened *jailor* asks *the question* of all others the most important, and asks it with an earnestness and respect that witnesses its sincerity, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Ver. 30, 25, 26, 30

Gracious God, to whose efficacious influence *the most obdurate heart* must submit, *awaken multitudes* who, like this once wretched *sinner*, but now beloved and triumphant *saint*, are insensible of their danger and misery; that seeing themselves perishing, they may *enquire after salvation!* And may it please thee, to put *a faithful word* into the mouth of *thy ministers*, that they may all join in directing such awakened souls *to believe in Christ*, and trust to him *for salvation!* When they are brought to this they may well *rejoice*; and however their hearts may be enlarged towards those who have been *the instruments of this blessed change*, none of the effects of their *tenderness* or *generosity* can afford *a pleasure* comparable to that, which *they* shall find in the consciousness of having *rescued souls from eternal death*, and conducted them into *the way of salvation*. 31, 33, 34

SECT. XXXVIII.

Paul and Silas are honourably dismissed from their confinement by the magistrates of Philippi, on insisting upon their privilege as Romans; and leave that city, after visiting the new converts there, Acts XVI. 35, *to the end.*

Acts XVI. 35.

AND when it was day, the magistrates

Acts XVI. 35.

THUS Paul and Silas spent the remainder of the night in the house of the jailor, sharing and increasing that joy which he found SECT. XXXVIII. Acts on XVI. 35.

SECT. XXXVIII.

on the admission of the gospel into his heart. *And when it was day the* Prætorian *magistrates* of Philippi, who were terrified by the earthquake[a], *sent the* lictors or *beadles*[b] by whom they had been scourged the day before, to the keeper of the prison, *saying*, *Dismiss those men* with the custody of whom thou wast yesterday charged; for this correction and confinement is all the punishment we shall inflict upon them.

Acts XVI. 35.

trates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

And the keeper of the prison told these things to Paul, saying, *The* prætors, our chief *magistrates* here, *heve sent* orders *that you may be dismissed*, and I inform you of it with great satisfaction: *Now therefore* you are at full liberty to *go out* whenever you please, *and* may *pursue your journey in peace*, sure of our earnest prayers that all prosperity and happiness may attend you, wherever you carry those good tidings which have been so comfortable to us.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

But Paul judged it proper to animadvert on the manner in which they had been used, and therefore called for the beadles, and *said to them*, As for these magistrates from whom you come, *they have beaten us who are Romans* and free citizens as well as themselves[c]; and this they have done *publicly* in the most ignominious manner, as if we had been common slaves, though we had never any legal trial, [*and*] were *uncondemned* of any crime at all; *and* after this they *have*

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do

a Were terrified by the earthquake.] Two ancient *manuscripts* mention this circumstance; and it is in itself very probable, separate from their authority.

b *The* lictors or *beadles*.] Perhaps the word ῥαβδοῦχοι, which Grotius would have to be retained in its Greek form, might have been rendered *vergers*, most agreeable to its *etymology*; but, as such officers only bear *a little wand*, or something resembling one, and the *Roman lictors* had a large *bundle of them* tied together, I thought the word *beadles*, as it is also the name of the officers by whom *offenders* among us are generally *whipped*, would present to an English reader the most genuine idea.

c *They have beaten us who are Romans*.] It is well known, that the *Valerian law* forbad, that *a Roman citizen* should be *bound*, and the *Sempronian*, that he should be *beaten with rods*. (See *Dr. Lardiner's Credib.* Book I. chap. x. § 3, 4, Vol. I. p. 498—500.) If it be asked, Why Paul and Silas, who had the same immunity, did not *plead this privilege before*? I must answer with Mr. Biscoe. That the hurry and noise of the execution prevented it; and perhaps amidst such a tumult it might be apprehended, that the people would have murthered them, if they had not been in some measure appeased by their sufferings; not to say, how possible it is, that the plea if made might not be regarded amidst such a riotous mob. The circumstances of Paul, when he pleaded it, Acts xxii. 25, were much different.——If it be farther asked, Why it was now *so soon believed*? It may be replied, not only that it was an extremely hazardous thing to make such a claim falsely, (for Claudius punished it with death; *Sueton. Claud. cap.* 25,) but also, that there was a certain dignity in the manner in which Paul made his plea, which added a sensible credibility to it, especially as they had now no further sufferings to apprehend, and as *the earthquake* which might perhaps affect the whole city, seemed to have so evident a reference to their case. See *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 7, p. 250, *&c seq.*

d *Let*

do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

have cast us into the common *prison: And do they now* think to *thrust us out* of the city *privately? By no means;* it is not at all fit that magistrates should be encouraged in such oppressive and arbitrary proceedings as these, which may be so injurious to the most innocent and worthy citizens, whenever a popular cry is raised against them: They cannot *but* know, that this their illegal proceeding hath given us a great advantage against them, if we were disposed to prosecute them to the utmost, according to the Roman law; if therefore they desire to accommodate the matter *let them* at least *come themselves, and conduct us* respectfully *out* of this place of confinement[d], into which we have been so unjustly thrown, and thus let them make the best amends they can to our reputation and character, after having irreparably injured us in our persons.

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates; and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

38 *And the beadles reported these words to* the prætors, who (as we observed above) were *the magistrates* from whom they came: *And when they heard that they were Romans, they were afraid,* well knowing, that even to have torn the garments of a citizen, and much more to have scourged him, especially thus publicly, and without hearing his defence, was a crime which might have exposed them to very high penalties, if the person injured had entered a complaint against them in the legal forms.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and

39 *And they came* therefore in their own persons to the prison where Paul and Silas were, *and comforted them*[e] in the best manner they could, acknowledging their innocence, and commending the patience and fortitude with which they had borne the punishment so rashly inflicted upon them: *And conducting them out* with the most respectful treatment, they *requested that they would*

d *Let them come themselves, and conduct us out.*] In all this Paul seems to have had a regard to the honour and interest of Chistianity in this place, as well as to their own civil rights, as *men* and *Romans;* for such a token of public respect from *the magistrates* would undoubtedly encourage the *new converts,* and remove a stumbling-block out of the way of others, who might not have discerned the true lustre of the characters of Paul and Silas amidst so much infamy as they had before suffered.

e *They came and comforted them.*] So *our translators* render the word παρεκαλεσαν in the *next verse,* as well as in many other places. Compare Acts xxii. 12; Rom. i. 12; 2 Cor. i. 4; vii. 6, in all which texts, and many others, it can have no other signification, though in several others it must signify *exhorted,* as it is justly rendered, Acts xi. 21; 1 Thess. ii. 11; Heb. iii. 13, and elsewhere. There are other instances, in which it signifies to *entreat,* 1 Cor. iv. 13; 1 Tim. v. 1. But I prefer the *first sense* here, as the *latter* is expressed in the *following clause,* and as it gives us an idea of a more respectful treatment, as De Dieu also has hinted.

f *They*

SECT. XXXVIII.

Acts XVI. 39.

would excuse what was past, and would with all convenient speed *depart from the city*, to prevent any of those popular tumults which might be the consequence of their longer abode there; where perhaps the rage of their former accusers might occasion farther embarrassment, both to the magistrates and to them.

and desired *them* to depart out of the city.

40 *And* upon this, *coming out of the prison* in the honourable manner we have described, *they* candidly agreed to excuse what had been done in prejudice of their rights; and only *entered into* [*the house of*] *Lydia*, their convert and friend, with whom they had lodged before: *And when they had seen the brethren* whom they were to leave behind them, *they comforted* them with an account of what God had done both for them and by them in the prison, and exhorted *them*[f] to such a stedfast faith and exemplary life, as Christianity always required, and was peculiarly suitable to their present circumstances; *and* then they *departed* out of Philippi[g], and directed their journey westward towards Thessalonica, where they met with new difficulties, which will be related in the following section.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16--19

We have seen Paul and Silas suffering, not for doing evil but good; for great good undoubtedly it was, to *cast out the dæmon* which possessed *the young woman*, of whom we have been reading, and made her *an instrument of mischief*, though to her mercenary masters *a means of gain*. Could she indeed have *foretold future events*, as perhaps she very falsely pretended, it had been *a curse* rather than *a benefit* to mankind to know them; but it is exceedingly probable that *this evil spirit*, being himself unacquainted with them, did, like many of his brethren, only delude

f *They comforted* and exhorted *them.*] I unite the *two senses* of the word here, as they would, to be sure, mingle on such an occasion *consolations* and *exhortations*. Such an extraordinary interposition of God for his suffering servants, and such an addition made to their church, had a natural tendency both to cheer their hearts, and to invigorate their pious resolutions. Accordingly it appears from *Paul's Epistle* to this church, that there were many excellent Christians among them, who expressed an affection for him, and a zeal for their religion, in some considerable degree correspondent to such encouragements and obligations; Philip. i. 5—7, 29, 30; iv. 10, 14—18.

g *And departed.*] Though many circumstances might now have invited their stay at Philippi, they wisely complied with the *request of the magistrates*, that they might not seem (as Brennius well observes,) to express any degree of *obstinacy* or *revenge*, and might give no suspicion of any design to *stir up the people* to any kind of *sedition*.

delude his votaries with *ambiguous answers*, which proved the occasion of false expectations, and numerous inconveniences. At least, it diverted them from all proper regards to *the true God*, the supreme Disposer of all events, and confirmed them in their unhappy attachment to those which are *by nature no Gods*, to those *vain idols*, by a regard to whom Satan was honoured, and the living Jehovah injured and affronted. SECT. XXXVIII.

Wisely did Paul, in imitation of his master, *refuse applause* 18
from so impure a tongue. Yet with what consistency could these Heathens *persecute him?* If this *damsel* spake under *a divine direction*, why should she *not be credited*, when she testified, that *these were servants of the true God, that taught the way of salvation?* If they were indeed so, how absurd, how impious, and how dangerous must it be, to *treat them with outrage*, instead of *reverence!* What an affront to *God!* What defiance of *salvation!* If Apollo was indeed any thing more *than an empty name*, if he was judged to have *any power* and *any deity*, what regards were owing to that *Jesus of Nazareth*, who appeared so much superior, that Apollo fled at his very name! but *the god of this world* had *blinded their eyes*, and reason and conscience remonstrated in vain, so long as *the hopes of gain* lay the opposite way. Deliver us, O 19
Lord, from such *fatal madness*, and teach us, how much more valuable *salvation* is, than any *worldly interest* which must be sacrificed to it!

The ministers of Christ, Paul and Silas, had been *injured* in 22, 23
their reputations, and *abused* in their persons; and in this instance, as in many others, were *treated like the filth of the world, and the off scouring of all things*, while *the ploughers ploughed upon their back, and made long furrows.* (1 Cor. iv. 13. Psal. cxxix. 3.) The plea of *privilege* amidst so tumultuous a multitude, might have been *in vain*, and therefore was for the present *prudently waved;* but it was *justly* afterwards *urged*, and *the magistrates* challenged for their *arbitrary proceedings*, before they knew who 37
and what they were, and required *to attend upon them in person*, to acknowledge and atone for their fault. Here was *a true magnanimity*, proceeding not from *pride* but from *humanity:* Their reputation as *ministers of Christ* was worthy of a guard, and worthy of some reparation where it had received so notorious an insult. The rashness of *the magistrates* was also worthy of being *rebuked* and *mortified;* which might have proved an occasion of suffering to *other innocent persons*, had not this instance of it been animadverted upon; yet *no revenge* was sought, nor were they, as some have been in the like case, laid under a necessity of *buying their peace*, to avoid a prosecution which might have ended in their ruin. Paul knew how to join the tender-

SECT. XXXVIII.

ness of *the Christian* with the dignity of *the Roman citizen*, and contended for *his own rights* no farther than that very contention might be an act of general goodness. Let us *go and do likewise:* Let us learn, even from the example of *these unjust rulers*, to be willing to *hear reason* and *truth* from those who seem most our inferiors, and *openly to retract* any ill-concerted steps which we may have taken; especially, let us be willing to make *the best reparation* in our power to the *innocent* and the *deserving*, if through imprudent heat, or weak credulity, we have been engaged in any degree to *injure them.*

Ver. 38, 39

SECT. XXXIX.

Paul preaches at Thessalonica and Beræa, but is soon chased from both these places by the violence of the unbelieving Jews. Acts XVII. 1—15.

Acts XVII. 1.

SECT. XXXIX.

WHEN Paul and Silas had quitted Philippi, in that honourable manner which was described in the former section, they went forward in their progress; *and taking their journey* westward *through Amphipolis and Apollonia*, which were likewise considerable cities of Macedonia, (the former of them having been once the capital of the first part of it,) *they came to* the celebrated *Thessalonica;* a city which lay near the coast of the Ægean sea, where the Roman governor held his residence, and *where there was* also *a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul's* usual *custom* of applying first to the Jews, *he entered in* to their assembly, and made one *among them, and* strongly argued and *discoursed to them for three* succeeding *sabbaths*[a], *from*

Acts XVII. 1.

Acts XVII. 1. NOW when they had passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

[a] *For three* succeeding *sabbaths.*] It has been concluded from hence, that Paul continued *but three weeks* at Thessalonica; but, as it evidently appears that, while he was in this city, he not only *wrought with his own hands* to procure a subsistence, (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.) but also *received supplies, more than once, from Philippi;* (compare Phil. iv. 16.) I think it much more probable, (as Dr. Benson well argues, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 94, 95,) that after the Jews appeared *so obstinate* in their infidelity, as most of them did, he *desisted* from disputing or teaching in their synagogue *after the third sabbath*, and then *preached* for some time *among the Gentiles*, before *the assault* mentioned ver. 5, which drove him from this city. It appears, that, during his stay here, great numbers of *Gentile Idolators* received the gospel with remarkable zeal and affection; (1 Thess. i. 9, 10,) so that *a church was founded*, in the midst of *their persecutions*, which became famous in all Macedonia and Asia; (*Ibid.* ver. 5—8.) And though *the apostle*, after having treated these new converts *with extraordinary tenderness* during his abode with them, was *quickly forced to leave them*, (chap. ii. 7, 8, 11, & *seq.*) and they about the same time *lost some Christian brethren by death*, who were dear to them, and might have been remarkably useful; (chap. iv. 13, & *seq.*) yet they continued to behave well

so

SECT. XXXIX.

from various passages out of *the scriptures*, for which they professed so great a regard; *Opening* [*them*] with great exactness, *and evidently shewing* them [b] by clear and incontestible arguments, taken from these sacred oracles, *that the Messiah ought*, according to the whole tenor of the prophecies, *to suffer* the last extremities from the unbelieving generation among whom he was to appear, *and* then *to rise from the dead*, how contrary soever it was to their prejudiced apprehensions; *and that this is the* true expected *Messiah*, [*even*] *Jesus* of Nazareth, *whom*, said he, *I* make it my business to *declare unto you*, and to all to whom I come.

Acts XVII. 3

3 Opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

This was the substance of what he inculcated upon them in repeated discourses, *and* the success was various; for notwithstanding all the prejudices of the Jews, such was the evidence of what he said, that *some of them believed, and adhered to Paul and Silas: and* also *a considerable number of the devout Greeks*, who had either embraced the Jewish religion, or at least worshipped with those that had, *and not a few of the principal women* of the city.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

But, on the other hand, there were many who rejected the gospel, and that, as it afterwards appeared, with great malignity of heart: For after some time, *the unbelieving Jews, filled with* indignation, and in a wild transport of ungovernable *zeal* on the occasion, *gathered together some mean and profligate fellows, and making a mob, threw the* whole *city into a tumult; and assaulting* with great violence *the house of Jason* [c], where Paul and his companions lodged, they *endeavoured*

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to

so that Paul received *a very comfortable account* of them by Timothy; (chap. iii. 6, 7,) and they afterwards *advanced in faith, charity, and courage*, amidst their growing trials; (2 Thess. i. 3, 4,) though *some few behaved irregularly*, and got into an idle and negligent way of living, which brings much reproach upon a Christian profession, and therefore required *church-discipline*. (*Ibid.* iii. 6—15.) It also appears that, when Paul was with them, he took an opportunity of *hinting* to them *the rise of Antichrist*, which, as they a little mistook his meaning, gave occasion to *that celebrated prophecy*, 2 Thess. ii. 1—12.——I conclude, that *these hints from the Epistles*, to complete and illustrate *the short account* given in the *Acts*, will not, here or elsewhere, be disagreeable to my readers, but that they will rather be pleased, to have as complete a view as may be of the *Scripture history* of the *Christian Church* in the *apostle's time*.

[b] *Evidently shewing* them.] This seems the proper import of the word παρατιθεμενος, which signifies *laying a thing open before the eyes of the spectators*. Grotius and Elsner think, the last words of the *preceding verse* should have begun thus; απο των γραφων διανοιγων, *opening and evincing from the Scriptures*, &c.

[c] *Jason.*] As Jason seems (by Rom. xvi. 21,) to have been *a relation of Paul*, it is not improbable, that he was an Hellenistical Jew; but Mr. L'Enfant's argument from *his name* seems not sufficient to prove him to have been so.

SECT. XXXIX.

Acts XVII. 5.

endeavoured to bring them out to the people, with a design to have exposed them to the fury of the mob, whom they had so incensed against them, that they were ready to have torn them

to bring them out to the people.

6 to pieces. *But not finding them* as they expected in the house, *they dragged* out *Jason and some* others *of the brethren* who were with him, *to the rulers of the city, crying out* with great fury, *These* turbulent, mischievous *men, that have turned the world upside down*, and thrown every place through which they have passed into the utmost confusion, *are* now *come hither also*, to create the same disturbance among us:

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also;

7 *And* this *Jason has privately received* and sheltered *them* under his roof, and so hath made himself responsible for all the mischief they may do here: *And* it is highly necessary that an immediate stop be put to their proceedings, as *all these men* are certainly engaged in some design that may be dangerous to the State, and are in effect guilty of high treason against the emperor; for they *act* directly *contrary* both *to the decrees* and interest *of Cæsar, saying, that there is another* independent and even superior *king* [*one*] *Jesus*[d]: whom though he were crucified at Jerusalem several years ago, they foolishly assert to be raised to universal empire, and demand the obedience of all men to him as their supreme Lord.

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying, That there is another king, *one* Jesus.

8 *And* as the charge was formed in such a manner, that their neglecting it might render them obnoxious to the Romans, *they* troubled and *alarmed* both *the multitude and the magistrates of the city when they heard these things*; which seemed to contain something of a formidable nature, which they could not fully understand.

8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.

9 But they were not willing to proceed to extremities against a neighbour, merely for harbouring persons who, whatever might be alledged against them, were in a manner strangers to him; *and* therefore, *having* only *taken security of Jason, and the rest* of the brethren who were brought before them, to bind them to their good behaviour, and to appear when they were called to

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

[d] *Another king.*] Though the *Roman Emperor* did not pretend to be *the only king* or *monarch*, yet in all the conquered provinces, or dependant states, there could be no *king* established without his consent: and it is not improbable, that the title of *Lord*, so frequently and so justly given by Christians to their *great Master*, might be used as a handle of accusation on such an occasion as this.

e *Of*

to answer to the charge exhibited against them, *they dismissed them* for that time.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither*, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

But the brethren, perceiving to how great personal danger the apostles and those that attended him would necessarily be exposed by a longer abode there, *immediately* without any farther delay, where such important lives were concerned, *sent away Paul and Silas by night to* the neighbouring city of *Berœa*, where they hoped they might pursue the charitable design of their journey with less opposition; *and* accordingly, *when they came thither they went into the synagogue of the Jews*, not discouraged by the ill usage they had met with upon their addresses to them elsewhere.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Here therefore, as in other places these messengers of Jesus gave them an account of the general contents of the gospel, and of the commission which they had in charge, always to open it first to the Jews, wherever they came. *And* they had the satisfaction to find, that *these* people *were of a* nobler and *more generous disposition than those of* that religion at *Thessalonica*[e] by whom they had been so ungratefully chased away; *for they received the word with all readiness of mind, daily examining the scriptures*[f], *whether those things* which Paul and Silas in their repeated discourses asserted, *were* indeed *so*. *Many of them therefore* finding how exact 12

12 Therefore many of

a

e *Of a* nobler and *more generous disposition*, &c.] There is, as Dr. Whitby has observed, a peculiar spirit and propriety in this expression, as the Jews boasted that they were ελευθεροι και ευγενεις, *free and noble*, by virtue of their descent from Abraham and the other patriarchs. These Berœans, imitating the rational faith of their great progenitor, were ευγενεστεροι, *his more genuine offspring*.

f *Daily examining the scriptures.*] It is very unjust to argue, from the conduct of the apostles with respect to the Jews, and from that of these free and generous *enquirers*, that christianity cannot be proved otherwise than from the prophecies of the *Old Testament*. It might be demonstrated from various topics of *external* and *internal evidence*, to those who never heard of any former revelation. Another very important additional argument does indeed arise from the accomplishment of prophecies; and when it has been *asserted* (as we know it has,) by the authorized teachers of the gospel, not only that Christ is a divine messenger, but also that his appearance was foretold to the Jews, then it is impossible to *vindicate Christ's mission* without shewing that it was so. But, in examining the particular texts in question, we are not only to enquire, whether the sense given by the apostles be, in itself considered, most easy and natural, which is generally the case; but (especially on account of the *obscurity* which must of course attend *prophecy*) we are to consider whether, the *improbability* of the sense they give in any particular instance, or in all instances, be sufficient to *balance the other proofs* they produced of being under a divine guidance, before we can draw any conclusion to the prejudice of their plenary inspiration; so very far should we be from concluding, without such an overbalance, that *christianity is false*, which yet has generally been the way of our indolent *half-thinkers*, and of Mr. Collins in particular, whose reflections on this text gave occasion to this remark.

SECT. XXXIX.

Acts XVII. 12

a correspondence there was between the words of these christian preachers, and those of their own prophets to which they referred, *believed* the gospel; *and* also several *of the Grecian women of considerable rank, and of the men not a few*; so that there was on the whole, a fair prospect of founding a flourishing church in this place.

of them believed: also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few.

13 *But* an unhappy opposition soon arose from the malice of their persecutors; for *as some of the Jews of Thessalonica understood that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berœa* with such promising success, not content with what they had done to oppose it at home, *they came thither also, raising* [*a storm among*] *the populace*[g], and representing Paul and his associates as factious and turbulent people, to whom it was dangerous to give any the least shelter or countenance.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 *And then immediately the brethen*, equally solicitous with those of Thessalonica in the like case, as to the danger he might incur in consequence of the growing influence of his unjust accusers, and the peculiar malice which they had against him, *sent away Paul, as if he were to go by sea* to some of the southren cities of Greece; and they chose to direct him to the road which led to the sea, that if he had not an opportunity of embarking, or did not think proper to do it, his malicious enemies might at least be discouraged from any farther attempt to pursue him; which they might probably have done, if they had known he would have travelled by land. *But Silas and Timothy*, as their characters were not so public, or their persons so obnoxious, did not go with him from Berœa, but *continued there* a while longer, to settle the new planted church, and to instruct them more fully in the doctrine of the gospel.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul, to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 *And they that conducted Paul, brought him* by land *as far as* the celebrated city of *Athens*, that unequalled seat of learning among the Greeks; *and having received an order* from him *to Silas and Timothy, that they should come to him as soon*

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus,

[g] *Raising a storm among the populace.*] Mr. Blackwell has righty observed, *Sacra. Class.* Vol. I. p. 230,) that this is the exact import of the word σαλευω which expresses a violent agitation of the sea, and admirably illustrates the rage and fury of a seditious multitude. (Compare Psal. xciii. 3, 4. Isai. xvii. 12, 13. Jer. xlvi. 7, 8.) See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 446.

Timotheus, for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

soon as might be[h], to inform him of the state of the new converts he had left behind him at Thessalonica and Berœa, *they went away*; and he continued alone at Athens, with a heart full of solicitude on account of his brethren, and of these infant churches.

SECT. XXXIII.

Acts XVII. 15

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH how much grace and propriety might *the apostle* say, of *bonds and imprisonments*, in the most grievous circumstances that could attend them, *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* (Acts xx. 24.) He gave a remarkable proof of this heroic temper, when having (as he himself expresses it) *been shamefully intreated at Philippi, he was bold in his God to preach the gospel of God at Thessalonica too,* though it were *with much contention*, through the perverse opposition of these *unbelieving Jews.* (1 Thess. ii. 2.) Ver. 1, 2

He boldly declared to them, and proved it by unanswerable evidence, that *the Messiah* whom they so eagerly expected, and of whose temporal kingdom they so fondly dreamt, *must*, in order to establish his claim from the accomplishment of prophecies, *suffer, and rise from the dead:* And then he shewed, agreeably to those important premises, that Jesus *whom he preached to them was that very person*; but instead of receiving his testimony with thankfulness, and the word of God with obedience, what iniquity and obstinacy of heart did *these Jews* shew! Unhappy nation, *who* as Paul most justly speaks of them, (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16,) *having killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, persecuted the apostles also; not pleasing God, and being contrary to all men forbidding*, so far as in them lay, the appointed messengers of this glorious salvation *to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved*; thereby alas, *filling up the measure of their iniquities, till wrath came upon them to the uttermost*, and avenged at once *the blood of Christ* and *that of his ministers*, whom they had slaughtered, and those immortal souls whom they had laboured to destroy. Ver. 3

Their

h *An order to Silas and Timothy that they should come to him, &c.*] Perhaps Paul expected, some considerable success would attend his labours at Athens, and was therefore desirous to engage the assistance of these pious and excellent persons. Nevertheless God did not see fit to answer these hopes; and though they came to him, as he had ordered, or at least one of them, that is, Timothy, he was quickly obliged to send him away, especially as he was so solicitous about his dear friends at Thessalonica. See 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

SECT. XXXIX.

Their blind and furious *zeal for the law*, to which, after all, *the apostles* did a much greater honour than they could possibly do, engaged them to list under their banners the vilest and most in-

Ver. 5 famous of mankind, *certain lewd fellows of the baser sort*, the pitch, of whose understandings, as well as the turn of their tempers, rendered them *the proper tools* upon such occasions: And these profligate wretches themselves, the reproach and the plague of mankind, are the persons into whose mouth *that senseless cry* 6 *against the apostles* was to be put, *that they turned the world upside down*. Competent judges indeed of the interests of society, and worthy guardians of its peace!

Such charges, we see, may be brought against the most innocent, the most benevolent, and the most useful of mankind. Thus was Paul accused by Tertullus, as *a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition throughout the world, and a ringleader of one* of the most pernicious *sects* that ever appeared in it: (Acts xxiv. 5.) Nor did Jesus, *our divine Master*, escape; but was accused, condemned, and executed, as *a traitor to Cæsar* and to his country. But could these clamorous creatures have thought of *proof*, where would they have been able to find it? If to testify *the truth* which God had given them in charge; if to exhort to *universal love*; if to command men that they should *study to be quiet, and do their own business*, that *if it were possible, as much as lay in them*, they should *live peaceably with all men, doing good to all as they had opportunity*; if to enforce these exhortations by the strongest arguments, the warmest exhortations by the most amiable examples; if thus to teach, and thus to act, were *turning the world upside down*, the *apostles* were indeed *the subverters of it*: But O, who would not pray for the happy time, when *the world* should be *thus subverted!*

7 Let the claims of Jesus to *universal monarchy* be rightly understood, and Cæsar shall find nothing *contrary to his* just *decrees*, but every thing subservient to his truest interest. The Redeemer's *kingdom is not of this world*, (John xviii. 36.) nor can the *just rights* both of *princes* and *subjects* be ever so effectually established, as by a submission to him. May *the kings of the earth* be *so wise* as to know this, and all under their government *so happy* as seriously to consider it.

9 *Security* was *taken of Paul's friends*, and it was prudent in *the* 10 *magistrates* to carry it no farther. *The apostle* himself was obliged *immediately* to *quit them*, under the shelter of the *night*, with a heart full of tender solicitude for these *new converts*; yet he did not reflect upon his journey to Thessalonica with regret, but amidst all the difficulties he met with, was (as he afterwards tells them) *incessantly thanking God on their account, because* they *received* the gospel *which they heard of him, not as the word of men*

men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, and *became followers of the churches of God* elsewhere. (1 Thess. ii. 13, 14.) SECT. XXXIX.

Providence brought him in safety and liberty to Berœa, and here he met with a more candid reception: The Berœans shewed a true *nobleness of spirit,* for *they received the word with readiness, and searched the scriptures daily,* that they might judge for themselves, *whether things were* there as Paul represented them. While *the ministers of Christ* are faithful and skilful in the execution of their office, they *will not desire* that what they say should be received with *an implicit subjection;* but will be *contented,* will be *solicitous,* it should be *tried by the standard of scripture.* To *this touchstone* may our doctrines and exhortations be honestly brought and let them always be *received* or *rejected* as they are found *agreeable* or *disagreeable* to it. 11, 12

SECT. XL.

Paul continues a while at Athens, and, being deeply affected with the idolatry of that learned city, makes an excellent discourse to them, but with little success. Acts XVII. 16, *to the end.*

Acts XVII. 16.
NOW while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

Acts XVII. 16.

NOW while Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy, after the message he had sent *them* (as was before observed) to come to him *at Athens,* the notice that he took of their religious state affected him with such concern and indignation, that *his spirit within him was strongly moved*[a], and had an unusual kind of edge set upon it, *while he beheld the* excessive superstition of that famous *city,* which was esteemed the seat of learning and politeness, and found it in so gross and scandalous a manner *enslaved to idolatry*[b]. *He therefore discoursed* publicly upon SECT. XL. Acts XVII. 16

17 Therefore disputed 17

[a] *His spirit within him was strongly moved.*] The word παῤῳξύνθη signifies that *a sharp edge was* as it were *set upon his spirit,* and that he was wrought up to a great *eagerness of zeal.* Yet it is observable, that it did not throw him into any *sallies of rage,* either in words or actions, but only engaged him courageously to attempt *stopping this torrent of popular superstition,* by the most serious and affectionate, yet at the same time manly and rational *remonstrances.* O that *Christian zeal* had always produced such effects!

[b] *He beheld the city enslaved to idolatry.*] This, which is here expressed in the *original* by κατείδωλον, appears to have been its proper character. Athens was therefore called by Ælian *the altar of Greece;* and Xenophon observes, "that it had *twice as many sacred festivals* as any other city." (*Xen. de Rep. Athen.* p. 700.) The grave Pausanias tells us, "It had *more images,* than all the rest of Greece:" (*Attic. cap.* 17, 24;) and one of the *satyrists* humorously says, "It was easier to find *a god* than *a man* there." (*Petron. Satyric. cap.* 17.) Dr. Hammond has a fine *note* to illustrate this. See also *Mr. Biscoe*

SECT. XI.

upon the great principles of natural and revealed religion *in the synagogue*, addressing himself *to the Jews, and to the* other *pious persons* [*that worshipped with them*] on their sabbath days[c]; *and* took all opportunities of speaking about matters of religion *every day, in the* great forum or *market-place, to those* Athenians *whom he met with* in the public edifices which were erected there.

Acts XVII. 17

puted he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 *But some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers opposed themselves to him*[d]; the former of which entirely denied a divine Providence, and held

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans

Biscoe at Boyle's Lect. chap. viii. § 11, p. 317, 321; and *The Knowledge of divine Things from Revel.* p. 238, 239. The author last mentioned tells us, (I wish I could find on what particular authorities,) that *a fool* had been *capitally condemned there* for killing one of *Æsculapius's sparrows*, and that *a little child*, accidentally taking up a piece of gold that fell from *Diana's crown* was *put to death* for sacrilege. (*Ibid.* p. 240.) The prevalence of such a variety of *senseless superstitions* in this most learned and polite city, which all its neighbours beheld with so much veneration, gives us a most lively and affecting idea of *the need* we have, in the most improved state of human reason, of being taught by *a divine revelation*. May the admirers of the *Grecian wisdom* seriously consider it, and they well find almost every one of *their classics* an advocate for *the gospel!*

[c] *The Jews and pious persons that worshipped with them.*] It appears plainly from *this text*, and perhaps also from ver. 4, I think beyond any other, that the character of σεβομενοι is at least sometimes given by Luke to persons who used to *worship the true God*, and yet *were not circumcised*, which if they had been, I think they would not have been distinguished from Jews. But that the title was *appropriated to such*, and especially that *such* could properly be called *proselytes of the gate*, in the technical sense in which Maimonides, and almost all our *modern writers* from him explain the word, will by no means follow.

[d] *Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.*] The Epicurean notions came so near to those of *our gay world*, that it may seem less needful to explain them any farther than is done in the *paraphrase:* and as for those of the Stoics, different writers, according to their fondness for, or their prejudices against, the *philosophy* of the Pagans, and of *this sect* in particular, have represented their doctrines in a very different view; and indeed the notorious *inconsistency* between some of *their own writers*, and some of the *ancients* in their account of them, has greatly perplexed the matter. But I think Dr. Benson has expressed himself, on the whole, in a very impartial and judicious, as well as comprehensive manner, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 100,) when he tells us, "They held, that *matter* was *eternal*, God *corporeal*," that is, a fiery substance, "and that either God was *the soul of the world*, or *the world itself* a God. They" generally "looked upon all things as subject to an *irresistible fatality*," though some of them at least seem to me to have exempted *the human will* from it; "that *virtue* was *its own sufficient reward*, and *vice its own sufficient punishment:* And they fluctuated exceedingly, as to their belief of *future rewards and punishments*, though they had some expectations of *a future state*" of existence, "as well as of *the conflagration* and *renovation of the world;*" with relation to which, several of them seem to have expected *a continual revolution* of exactly *similar events* at equally distant periods of time. The attentive reader will easily see, *how opposite* the genius of *each of these sects* was to the pure and humble spirit of Christianity, and how happily *the apostle* levels his incomparable discourse at some of the most distinguishing and important *errors of each*, while, without expressly attacking either, he seems only intent of giving a plain summary of *his own religious principles*, in which he appears a most charming model of the true way of teaching and reforming mankind. (See *Dr. Bentley at Boyle's Lecture*, Sermon II. at the beginning.) For a larger account of the Epicureans and Stoics, see *Le Clerc's Eccles. Hist. Crol.* § ii. *cap.* 4, 5; Budæus in his excellent *Hist. of Phil. cap.* iv. § 45, 50, *& ibid.* § 36—40; and above all for the latter, *Lips. Manuduct. ad Phil. Stoicam, præsertim, lib.* i. *cap.* 14, 15.

reans, and of the Stoics, encountered him; and some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

held the world to be merely the effect of chance, asserting pleasure to be man's chief good, and limiting his existence to the present state; and the latter maintained the doctrine of an universal necessity, and proudly exalted their wise men, as if they were in some respects superior to the Deity himself: The notions of both these were so directly contrary to the doctrine which Paul taught, that it is no wonder they proved violent antagonists; *and* as several were present at these occasional debates, *some* scornfully *said*, *What will this retailer of scraps say*[e]*?* this trifling fellow, that has somewhere or another picked up some scattered notions, with which he is vain enough to think he may make a figure here? *And others* said, *He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign deities* or dæmons: *because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection;* the former of which they, through their negligence in attending, ridiculously took for a deified man, and the other for a goddess[f].

SECT. XI.

Acts XVII. 18

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying,

And as the croud increased to a greater number than could conveniently hear him in the place where they then were, *they took him, and conducted* [*him*] *to* that celebrated hill near the citadel, which was called *the Areopagus*[g], being a

19

[e] *Retailer of scraps.*] This was the best phrase I could think of, to express the *original* σπερμολογος which signifies "a contemptible creature, that picks up scattered seeds in the market, or elsewhere;" and therefore Mr. Fleming (*Christol.* Vol. II. p. 429,) would render it *grain-gatherer*, or, less literally, *holder-forth*. To have rendered it *this mountebank*, as the *translation* of 1727 does, seemed both ludicrous and inaccurate. The *original* admirably expresses *the contempt* they had of *an unknown foreigner*, that pretended to teach all the several professors of their learned and illustrious body of *philosophers* —— Witsius (*Meletem.* p. 81—83,) has taken great pains to shew by many authorities, that it comprehends the *three* ideas of *meanness, garrulity*, and *impiety*, as if it had been said, *This contemptible, prattling, sacrilegious creature;* but, as this seems to strain the matter to an extreme, I chose *the least malignant sense*, especially as that was *petulant enough*, and gives one but an ill idea of their sense and politeness.

[f] *Jesus, and the resurrection.*] It seems with great reason that Dr. Hammond follows Chrysostom's interpretation, which is that given in the *paraphrase*. Stupid as the mistake seems, it is the less to be wondered at, since *Resurrection* might as well be counted a *deity*, as *Shame*, *Famine*, and *Desire*, among the Athenians, *Pausan. Attic. cap.* 17,) or as *the Fever*, and some things too scandalous here to name, were among the Romans, as Dr. Hammond, Mr. Reeves, (*Apol.* Vol. II. p. 53,) and many others have long since remarked. Raphelius's attempt to overthrow this interpretation, by proving that δαιμονιον signifies *the person of a dæmon*, and also *any property* or *work belonging to him*, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 167—172,) is quite unsuccessful; for none of his authorities prove, it expresses *both* in the same place.

[g] *They took him, and conducted him to the Areopagus.*] For an account of this celebrated place, and *the court of judges* which sat there, to try all the most important causes civil or criminal, see *Archbishop Potter's Greek Antiq.* Book I. chap. 19, and, for the *etymology*, *Dr. Hammond* and *Le Clerc's Supplement*. As the cognizance of *religious causes* also lay in these judges, Beza, Dr. Hammond, and some other *critics* have thought, that Paul was brought to *a formal trial* before them; but it evidently appears to be a mistake, not only from the

SECT. XI.

Acts XVII. 19

a part of their city dedicated to Mars the God of battle, whom they called Areios, and the seat of that illustrious senate who had the name of Areopagites, from their assembling there. And when he was come thither they applied to him, *saying*, *May we* be allowed to *know* more fully and particularly *what this new doctrine is which*

ing, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

20 *is spoken by thee? For thou bringest some strange things to our ears*, exceedingly different from what we have ever received from any of those many professors of various learning which this celebrated city has produced: *We would therefore* willingly *know, what these things mean*; and choose to hear them from thine own mouth, rather than by the uncertain report of others, who may not perhaps clearly understand what thou intendest, or accurately relate what thou hast said.

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 Now this was entirely agreeable to the genius of the place: *for all the Athenians, and the* numerous *strangers that sojourn among them, delight to spend their leisure time*, of which many of them have a great deal, *in nothing else but telling or hearing somewhat new*[h], which may amuse that speculative and curious temper they are exceeding prone to indulge.

21 (For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.)

22 *Paul therefore standing up in the middle of the Areopagus*, where he might be most conveniently heard by a large number of people, addressed himself to them in a very suitable discourse, and *said, Ye men of Athens*, it seems as if I might address you with the greater prospect of success on the occasion which now calls me to speak among you, as *I perceive you are exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers*[i]. *For as*

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

the title by which Paul addresses them in his discourse, (from which Limborch argues,) but from the whole *tenor of the story* and particularly as the persons who brought him hither are represented, not as *accusing him* of any thing obnoxious, but only as *desiring to be informed*, what *that strange thing* his new doctrine was.

[h] *The strangers that sojourn among them, delight to spend their leisure time* (ευκαιρουν) *in —somewhat new.*] It is well known that the young nobility and gentry of Italy, and most of the neighbouring countries, generally *studied* some time *at Athens*, where there were *the most celebrated professors* in all the liberal arts and sciences. Several of the *critics* have shewn, how remarkable the Athenians were for their *love of novelty*, and none, that I recollect, better than Raphelius, *Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 172, 173.

[i] *Exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers.*] This *English phrase*, which is very agreeable to the *etymology* of δεισιδαιμονεστερους, has, what I think *a version of Scripture* should always if possible have, *the ambiguity of the original*, which Dr. Hammond, and especially Revius *on Valla*, prove to be capable of *a good* as well as *a bad sense*; (compare Acts xxv. 19;) whereas neither *superstitious* nor *religious* have *that ambiguity*.—Dr. Lardner, *Credib.* Book I. chap. 8, § 7, Vol. I. p. 427.—430, (as Mr. Fleming also had done, *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 431,) has well observed,

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

as I passed along the streets of this elegant and magnificent city, *and beheld the objects* and instruments *of your worship*[k], *I found an altar on which there was this* remarkable *inscription*, "*To the unknown God*[l];" so desirous do you seem to be, that no deity, whether known or unknown, may be passed by without some regard: Now I should think myself inexpressibly happy, if on this incident I might graft those instructions which might bring you to the true knowledge of religion, and determine the devotions you seem so ready to pay to him who is the only worthy object of them: *Him therefore whom* in this instance *ye worship, without* particularly

observed, that *giving it the worst signification* of which it is capable does not well suit *the decorum*, which so well-bred a man as Paul was, would no doubt maintain before this polite assembly; whereas, on our interpretation, it *opens his discourse*, not only in *an inoffensive*, but in *a very obliging* manner, which I have endeavoured farther to express in the *paraphrase*. This accurate *critic* shews, that *strangers at Athens* used to *begin* their public discourses *with some compliment* to the place and its inhabitants. The medium Paul chooses cannot be sufficiently admired.

k *The objects* and instruments *of your worship.*] This is the proper signification of σεβασματα, which has *no English word* exactly corresponding to it. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 4.

l *To the unknown God.*] The express testimony of Lucian *(Philopat. ad fin.)* sufficiently proves, that there was *such an inscription* at Athens, and shews, how unnecessary, as well as unwarrantable, it was in Jerom to suppose, that *the apostle*, to serve his own purpose, gives this turn to *an inscription*, which bore on its front *a plurality of deities*. Whence this important *phænomenon* arose, or to what it particularly referred, it is more difficult to say. Witsius, *(Melet.* p. 85.) with Heinsius, *(in loc.)* understands it of Jehovah, whose name, not being pronounced by the Jews themselves, might give occasion to this appellation; and to this sense Mr. Biscoe inclines, *Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 22, p. 322—325. Dr. Welwood *(Pref. to the Banquet of Xenophon*, p. 18, 19,) supposes, that Socrates reared *this altar*, to express his devotion to the *one living and true God*, of whom the Athenians had no notion, and whose incomprehensible being he insinuated, by this inscription, to be far beyond the reach of their understanding or his own: and in this I should joyfully acquiesce, could I find *one ancient testimony* in confirmation of the fact. As it is, to omit other conjectures, I must give the preference to that, which Beza and Dr. Hammond have mentioned, and which Mr. Hallet *(Disc. on Scrip.* Vol. I. p. 307, 308,) has laboured at large to confirm and illustrate, though I think none of these learned writers has set it in its most natural and advantageous light. Diogenes Laertius, in his *Life of* Epimenides, (see *lib.* i. p. 29, *C.* with the *Notes* of J. Casaubon and Menagius,) assures us, that in the time of that philosopher, [about 600 *years before Christ*,] there was *a terrible pestilence* at Athens, in order to avert which, when none of the deities to whom they sacrificed appeared able or willing to help them, Epimenides advised them to bring *some sheep* to the Areopagus, and, letting them loose from thence, to follow them till they lay down, and then to *sacrifice them* (as I suppose the words τω προσηκοντι Θεω signify,) *to the God near whose temple or altar they then were.* Now it seems probable, that Athens not being then *so full* of these *monuments of superstition* as afterwards, these sheep lay down in places where *none of them were near*, and so occasioned *the rearing* what the historian calls *anonymous altars*, or altars each of which had the inscription αγνωστω Θεω, *to the unknown God*, meaning thereby *the Deity who had sent the plague*, whoever he he were; one of which altars, at least, however it might have been repaired, remained till *Paul's time*, and long after. Now, as *the God*, whom Paul preached, as *Lord of all*, was indeed *the Deity who sent and removed this pestilence*, the *apostle* might with great propriety tell the Athenians, he declared to them him, *whom without knowing him they worshipped*, as I think the concluding words of the 23d *verse* may most decently be rendered.

m *Neither*

SECT. XI.

particularly *knowing him, do I* now publicly *declare unto you.* This is the deity that I am
Acts XVII. come to preach among you, even *the* one glorious and eternal *God, who made the world and*
24 *all things that are therein;* and it is evident, that such must be the excellency of his nature, that being the supreme and uncontroulable *Lord* of all the dominions *of heaven and earth,* he *dwelleth not in temples made with hands:*
25 *Neither is he served by human hands* lifted up in prayer, or stretched out with the most costly offerings, *as if he stood in need of any thing* which we can give, or which we can do[m]: For *he himself* is indeed the great universal benefactor, from whom all our enjoyments and all our powers of action are derived; as he is continually *giving to all* the human race, *life and breath, and all things,* which they can neither consecrate to him, or possess themselves.
26 *And he hath made of one blood,* and caused to descend from one original pair, the immediate work of his own almighty power and goodness, *the whole nation* and species *of men*[n], now by his providential care so propagated, as to *inhabit* and cover *all the face of the earth, having marked out* in his eternal and unerring counsel, *the times fore-allotted* [*to each*] in their respective order[o], *and* appointed *the* several *boundaries*
27 *of their* different *habitations:* All things in the disposition of his Providence centering in this one

24 God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands:

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation:

27 That they should seek

[m] *Neither is he served by human hands,* &c.] Dr. Bentley, (at *Boyle's Lect.* Serm. II. p. 43,) and many other *critics,* have well observed, this refers to a *foolish notion* among the Heathens, that *the gods fed on the fumes of sacrifice.* Their votaries also *cloathed their images* with splendid garments, and *waited upon them* in other services, ill becoming the majesty and purity essential to the divine nature.

[n] *He hath made of one blood (παν εθνος ανθρωπων) the whole nation of men.*] By this expression *the apostle* shewed them, in the most unaffected manner, that, though he were *a Jew,* he was not enslaved to any *narrow views,* but looked on *all mankind* as *his brethren.* I see no reason to imagine, as Elsner does, that *the apostle* has any reference here to *a notion* of some of the *philosophers,* mentioned by Julian, "that the whole human race sprung up from some drops of *sacred blood,* which fell down from Jupiter." (*Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 447, 448.) It would, I think, have been *beneath him* to have taken the advantage of such an *ambiguity of expression.* If it be objected, (as I know it has been,) that no principle of reason could prove, that *all mankind* were descended from *one original pair,* I answer, That it was not necessary for *the apostle* separately to prove *every article* of his doctrine, of which he here gives a summary account. Had they heard him out, he would no doubt have given them *proper evidence,* that he had *a commission from God* to teach it, and that therefore it was to be received *on the authority* of the revealer.

[o] *The times fore-allotted to each* in their respective order.] The expression προτεταγμενους καιρους signifies the *wisdom,* as well as *reality,* of this *divine disposition* of events, as fixed by God in his eternal counsels under the conduct of his Providence, which therefore I have endeavoured to express in the *paraphrase.* (Compare *note* f on chap. xiii. 48, p. 107.) This evidently struck at the root of the whole Epicurean system.

seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

one great end, *that they might* be excited to *seek after the Lord* their Maker, *if possibly*, amidst all the darkness which their own degeneracy and prejudice have brought upon their minds, *they might feel after him, and* be so happy as to *find him* out, in the knowledge of whom their supreme happiness consists; who indeed, *though he be* so little known and regarded by the generality of mankind, yet is *not far from every one of us: For in him we* perpetually *live, and are moved, and do exist* p; the continuance of all our active powers, and even of our being, is ever owing to his steady and uninterrupted agency upon us, according to those stated laws of operation which he hath wisely been pleased to lay down for himself; *as some also of your own poets have* in effect *said*, and particularly Aratus, in those remarkable words, "*For we his offspring are* q." *We therefore*, with all the noble powers and faculties of the rational nature, *being* only *the offspring of God*, and bearing but a feeble ray of those consummate and original glories which shine forth in him, *ought not* surely *to imagine the Deity to be like* any thing inferior even to ourselves, any thing so mean and vile as *gold, or silver, or stone*, (of which last material, base as it is, most of the idols are made) how curiously soever *wrought by the art and contrivance of man.* Such are indeed the gross conceptions that have long been entertained by a great part of mankind, but you are now called to correct these irregular ideas, and to

SECT. XI.

Acts XVII.

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

28

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

29

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked

30

p *In him we live, and (κινουμεθα) are moved, and do exist.*] No words can better express that *continual and necessary dependance* of all derived beings, in their existence, and all their operations, on their *first* and *almighty cause*, which the truest *philosophy*, as well as *theology*, teaches. The thought, in words just like these, is found in an old *Greek poet*; but Paul does not mention it as *a quotation*, so that I rather think with Le Clerc, that the *poet* borrowed it from hence, though to be sure, many of the *ancients* had before expressed themselves much to the same purpose. See *Gataker ad Antonin. lib.* iv. § 23, & *lib.* v. § 27.

q *For we his offspring are.*] These words, Του γαρ και γενος εσμεν, (which I chose to put into a *poetical order* in the *version*, as best imitating the *original*,) are well known to be found in Aratus, a poet of Cilicia, Paul's own country, who lived almost 300 years before this time.——I wonder so few writers should have added, that they are, with the alteration of one letter only, to be found in *the Hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter*, of the Supreme God, which I willingly mention, as beyond comparison the purest and finest piece of *natural religion*, of its length, which I know in the whole world of *Pagan antiquity*; and which, so far as I can recollect, contains nothing unworthy of *a Christian*, or, I had almost said, of *an inspired pen*. It is to be found in *Hen. Steph. Poes. Philosoph.* p. 49, & *seq.* and with *Dupont's Latin Translation* in *Cudworth's Intellect. System*, Book I. chap. 4, p. 432, 433; and I am sorry I know not where to refer my reader to a good *English version* of it. The *apostle* might perhaps refer to Cleanthes, as well as to his countryman Aratus, when he introduces this quotation, as what *some of their own poets* had said.

r *God*

SECT. XI.

Acts XVII.

to govern yourselves by more rational and exalted views of religion; *for though God*, as it were *overlooked the time of* this *ignorance*, and did not bear any general testimony against these
30 corruptions in worship, nor severely punish the nations who fell into them, so long as they maintained any thing of natural virtue, humanity, and probity[r]; *he now* interposes in a public and solemn manner, and expressly *charges all men*, to whom the sound of the gospel comes, *every where to repent* and return to his worship and obedience, as they regard their eternal hap-
31 piness and salvation. And this he requires with a merciful kind of severity and importunity, as what must immediately be done, *because he hath appointed a* great and awful *day, in which he will judge the* whole *world in righteousness*, and pass a final sentence of happiness or misery on each, according to his true character and behaviour; which he will do *by that* illustrious *Man, whom he hath* by miraculous interpositions marked out as *ordained* for that important purpose, *of which he hath given* sufficient *assurance to all men, by raising him from the dead*, according to his known and public prediction, whereby he has demonstrated how able he is to raise others.

winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by *that* man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 *And when they heard* him making mention, though but incidentally, *of the resurrection of the dead, some* rudely mocked, and without staying to hear the evidence[s], *made a jest of it* as a despicable and incredible tale, not worthy to be any longer heard: *And others*, whose curiosity was satisfied in hearing in a few words his scheme and

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said,

r *God* as it were *overlooked the times of* this *ignorance.*] This ὑπεριδὼν expresses, which Mr. Howe paraphrases, "The beams of his eye did in a manner shoot over them;" (*Howe's Works*, Vol. II. p. 23,) that is, He did not appear to take notice of them by sending express messages to them, as he did to the Jews, and now also to the Gentiles, as it follows, *charging all men every where to repent.*——The reader will easily perceive, there is *a dignity* in this latter expression, becoming one who was conscious to himself that he was indeed *an ambassador from the King of heaven*, who could (to allude to that remarkable story, *Liv. lib.* xlv. *cap.* 12,) *draw a circle* about the greatest monarch, and demand *a decisive answer* before he stirred out of it. This *universal demand of repentance* declared, in the strongest terms, *universal guilt*, and admirably confronted *the pride* of the haughtiest Stoic of them all; and at the same time, bore down all the *idle plea of fatality*; for who could *repent* of doing what he apprehended *he could not but have done?*

s Without staying to hear the evidence.] We are by no means to imagine, this was all *the apostle* intended to have said; but the *indolence* of some of *these philosophers*, and the *petulancy* of others of them, cut him short; and so they went down to *righteous condemnation*, under the guilt of having *rejected a gospel*, the proof of which they might have learnt in one single day, but would not give themselves the trouble of examining; and *this is the condemnation* among US.

t *Dionysius*

said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

and design, would not allow themselves to attend to his proofs of so extraordinary an assertion; but coldly *said*, It is enough for the present, *we will hear thee again upon this subject*, when a more convenient opportunity offers. SECT. XI. Acts XVII. 32

33 So Paul departed from among them.

And thus Paul, finding so little disposition in this learned auditory to receive the truth, or so much as to hearken to the evidence of it, *went out of the midst of them*, and left by far the greater part of the assembly, (notwithstanding all the conceit they had of their own learning, knowledge, and wisdom,) in that deplorable state of ignorance, folly, and superstition, in which he found them. 33

34 Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Nevertheless, though what he said was so generally slighted, *some men adhered to him, and* inquired farther into the evidence of that extraordinary doctrine which he taught concerning Jesus and his resurrection; the consequence of which was, that they *believed* the gospel, and made a public and courageous profession of it: *Among whom was* the celebrated *Dionysius the Areopagite*, a magistrate of great honour and dignity among them[t], *and a woman* of considerable rank and character in the city, *whose name was Damaris; and* there were also some *others with them*, whom we shall not particularly mention. 34

IMPROVEMENT.

ADORED be the depths of divine counsel and grace, that when *in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by* what they impiously derided as *the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* 1 Cor. i. 21.) Whose *spirit* is not *stirred* in some measure, *to behold* the learned and polite city of Athens, not only abandoned to *trifling speculations, but enslaved to idolatry and superstition?* And, on the other hand, who can be so insensible of all the charms of reason and true eloquence, as not to be delighted with those prudent and generous attempts which Paul made to recover them from it? When derided and affronted as *a vain babbler*, as *a retailer of scraps*, by those who indeed Ver. 32 16 21 18

t *Dionysius the Areopagite*, &c.] The members of this court, of which Dionysius was one, are well known to have been *persons of great dignity*, chosen from among the best families and characters in Athens, so that the title grew into a proverb of honour and integrity. See *Cic. ad Attic. lib.* i. *Epist.* 14. *Aul. Gell. Noct. Att. lib.* xii. *cap.* 7, *Wits. Meletem*, p. 86—88. and *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 12, p. 325, 326.

SECT. XI.

indeed shewed themselves to deserve that infamous name, *judging a matter before they heard it*, and so convicting themselves of *shame* and folly, (Prov. xviii. 13.) he *in the meekness of wisdom*,
Ver. 22 addresses himself to them with that *soft tongue which breaketh the bones.* (Prov. xxv. 15.) His *doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew:* (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Pity it was that it produced no more valuable fruits, but rather was *abused* by some that heard it, to nourish those *poisonous weeds* which were, alas,
23 the native growth of this luxuriant soil.

We see, that while Paul passed through the *streets of Athens*, his mind was filled with such pious and benevolent affections as became the mind of a christian and an *apostle;* and beholding this inscription *to the unknown God*, he applies himself immediately to *declare him* to them. Adored be the divine goodness, that we are from our infancy happy in the use of such *divine instructions* as he gave the Athenians and others; and that though we *worship a God* whose infinite perfections can never be traced out, he is
24 not entirely *an unknown deity* to us! May he be *known, adored,* and *obeyed*, wide as the works of his hands extend! Even he, the supreme *Lord of all*, who *made heaven and earth, and all that is*
25 *in them;* in consequence of which he is *infinitely superior* to all our *most exalted services*, as well as *beyond* any of those *representations of him* which the ignorance and folly of men have invented in *gold, silver*, and *stone.* His power *created all*, and by his
29 goodness *all are supported.* Let us consider ourselves as *his off-*
26, 27 *spring*, honouring and loving him as the great *Father of our spirits;* and since we have so necessary and uninterrupted a depen-
28 dance upon him, since *in him we live, and move, and exist* continually, let all the affections of our hearts, and all the actions of our lives, be consecrated to his service: And this so much the rather, as it evidently appears, by the revelation of his gospel, that he does not *overlook us*, but in the most solemn manner *calls*
30 *upon us*, and upon *all men every where to repent*, and to return to him; setting before us in so clear a view the awful solemnity of of *that appointed day, in which he will judge the* whole *world in*
31 *righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained* to this glorious purpose, even by Jesus, to whom, as the Son of man, *all judgment is* wisely and righteously *committed. The Lord grant that* we may all *find mercy of the Lord in that day!* (2 Tim. 1. 18.) In the mean time, may the declaration of it *bring multitudes* to
34 *repentance* and *faith;* and especially may it work thus on those who, like Dionysius and Damaris, are *distinguished* by their rank and circumstances in life, that *their usefulness* in the world may be as extensive as *their influence*, and their names *precious in the church* among those that are yet unborn.

SECT.

SECT. XLI.

Paul settles for a year and a half at Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla, is encouraged by a vision of Christ there, and rescued by Gallio from the rage of the Jews. Acts XVIII. 1—17.

Acts XVIII. 1.

1 AFTER these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

Acts XVIII. 1.

AFTER these things, of which an account has been given in the preceding section, *Paul departing from Athens came to* the polite and flourishing city of *Corinth*, so famous for its elegance and magnificence, and equally remarkable for the dissolute manners of its inhabitants [a]. *And finding* there *a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus,* a province of the Lesser Asia, not far from Galatia and Cappadocia, who was *lately come from Italy with Priscilla his wife, because* the emperor *Claudius* Cæsar *had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome* [b]; Paul entered into such an intimacy with them, that *he went to them* to lodge at their house. *And as he* formerly had learnt the business which they followed, and *was* capable *of* exercising *the same trade* [c] *he continued with them*

SECT. xli.

Acts XVIII. 1

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately came from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) and came unto them.

2

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and

3

a *Corinth*, &c] Antiquity abounds with passages relating to this city, which before it was destroyed by Mummius, was looked upon by the Romans as a rival almost as dangerous as Carthage; and having been restored by Julius Cæsar, with its almost unparalleled advantages of situation, was grown very considerable. The reader may see some entertaining remarks concerning it in *Witsius Meletem*, p. 90.

b *Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.*]. Though Josephus be silent as to this edict, probably as he thought it more prudent to omit the mention of it in a history, in which it is plain he studies to recommend himself and his people to the Romans, yet it is well known, that the fact is expressly mentioned by Suetonius, (*Claud. cap.* 25,) and that Dio (*lib.* lx. p. 669. *A.*) has something to the same purpose; *for prohibiting their religious assemblies* was in fact *banishing them*, as Mr. Fleming observes, *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 27.——I pretend not certainly to determine, whether that Chrestus, whom Suetonius mentions as the occasion of those tumults among the Jews, for which they were expelled from Rome, were, as Abp. Usher, (*Annal.* p. 669.) and Vandale *de Orac.* p. 604.) suppose, *a seditious Jew*, or whether, as it is generally thought, the name be a corruption of Christus: (See *Tertul. Apol. cap.* 3. and *Lactant. lib.* iv. *cap.* 7.) Yet I think the latter much more probable, and that the spread of christianity, which was looked upon as a *sect of Jews*, and which we know prevailed at Rome about this time, gave that jealous and wretched emperor an unnecessary alarm, the occasion of which Suetonius, not thoroughly understanding it, has misrepresented. And if this were the case, it might be, as Dr. Lardner well observes, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 11. § 3. Vol. I. p. 556.) an additional reason why Josephus, who is always cautious on this head, has passed it over without notice.

c *Of the same trade.*] It has with great propriety been observed and shewn by many learned men here, that it was a point of conscience with the Jews to *teach their children some trade*, even though they bred them up to the liberal sciences. Hence one of their *rabbies* is sirnamed *the shoemaker*, and another *the baker*, &c. (See *Drusius* and *Grotius in loc. Wist. Meletem.* p. 11, 12. and *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 3. p. 272—274.) And it is a custom still prevailing among the Easterns

SECT. xli.

Acts XVIII.

them there, *and wrought* [*at it*] for his subsistence: (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 12. and 2 Thess. iii. 8.) *For they were tent-makers by trade,* whose business it was to make tents or pavilions of linen or skins, which were much used, not only by soldiers and travellers, but by others in those hot countries; and Paul (as we have said) had been instructed in that art, as it was usual for those of the Jews who had the most learned education, to be brought up to some mechanical employment for the amusement of their leisure hours, and for their maintenance in life, if any unforeseen revolution should strip them of every thing else which they had to depend upon.

and wrought: (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.)

3

4 *But* while he took up his abode here, *he disputed in the synagogue every sabbath-day, and* earnestly *persuaded* both *the Jews and the Greeks*[d] to embrace christianity, as a religion founded in reason and truth, and the great source and security of happiness both in time and eternity: And he had some success, particularly with regard to the families of Stephanas and Epenetus, who were some of the first converts to christianity here. (Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 15. Rom. xvi. 5. and 1 Cor. i. 14, 16.)

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews, and the Greeks.

5 *And as soon as Silas and Timothy,* whom he had expected at Athens, *came from Macedonia* to

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come

erns. I think Sir Paul Ricaut somewhere observes, that *the Grand Seignior,* to whom he was ambassador, was taught to *make wooden spoons.* And this is intended, not only for an amusement, but to remind *youth of the highest rank,* how possible it is that they may fall into circumstances, in which it may be *necessary for them* to support life by such labours as these, which, to be sure, are vastly preferable to begging. It is therefore very ungenerous in Orobio to mention this, as any *reproach* to Paul, or as bringing his character into the least degree of suspicion.——Paul might have peculiar reasons for this at Corinth, not only as being *a stranger,* and with some prejudices lying against him as a teacher of a new religion, but perhaps also, as Mr. Cradock observes, (*Apost. Hist.* p. 111, 112,) from some prophetic intimation of *that false apostle,* who should arise there, and make a great merit of *preaching gratis,* while at the same time he domineered over them in a most inconsistent as well as unchristian manner. (See 2 Cor. xi. 7—20.) Whether Paul, and these his companions, *made common tents,* or *wove tapestry hangings,* is a question of no importance, though I think the former probable, as the latter would require a more exact skill, than a person so generally employed in far different work would be like to acquire.

d *Persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.* Some render ἔπειθε, *he tried to gain upon them;* but the word [*persuade*] is often used to signify the attempt, without determining *the success.* It is generally taken for granted, that these Greeks were *a kind of proselytes;* but we have before hinted, how possible it was, that Gentiles might out of curiosity attend such extraordinary preachers in *Jewish synagogues,* though they did not commonly worship there, which would especially take place in this instance, considering the miracles which Paul wrought to Corinth, to which he so often refers in the *two epistles* which he afterwards wrote to that church. Compare 1 Cor. i. 6, 7. ii. 4, 5. xii. 4—11. xiv. 2 Cor. xi. 5. xii. 12, 13.

e *As*

come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was Christ.

SECT. xli.

Acts XVIII. 5

to him at Corinth[e], *Paul*, farther animated by the presence of his brethren, and the accounts they brought him of the happy consequences of his labours at Thessalonica and elsewhere, *was borne away* by an unusual impulse *in* [*his*] *spirit*[f], *and* zealously persisting in his work, openly *testified to the Jews*, and by the strongest arguments endeavoured to convince them *that Jesus was* undoubtedly *the* true *Messiah*, whom they pretended impatiently to expect. *But when*, instead of receiving a testimony so warmly urged, and supported with the most demonstrative proofs, *they* obstinately and perversely *set themselves in opposition* to the doctrine he taught, *and* even *blasphemed* that glorious name on which he was pressing them to fix their dependance; *he shook his garment*, to signify, that from that time he was determined he would have no more to do with them, or any thing belonging to them; and also to intimate, that God would soon shake them off, as unworthy to be numbered among his people; *and* upon this he solemnly *said to them*, *Let* the guilt of *your blood be upon your own head*, and there let it rest: *I am pure* from it, and declare unto you, that by this wilful impenitence and unbelief you are your own murtherers. (Compare Exek. xxxiii. 2—9.) And as God and man can witness that I have done all in my power to prevent so sad an event, I now desist from any farther attempts of this kind; and *from henceforth*, while I continue in this city, *I will go* and preach *to the Gentiles*, who will readily receive that gospel which you so ungratefully reject.

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

6

And

e *As soon as Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia.*] Silas and Timothy had been *left at Berœa*, when Paul came from thence, and had directions sent them, as soon as he arrived at Athens, quickly to *follow him*; (chap xvii. 14, 15.) which Timothy accordingly did, and was sent back again by Paul to Thessalonica to confirm the faith of his dear converts there of whom he had brought so good an account; (1 Thess. iii. 2, 5, 6.) And it seems to have been from this journey that Timothy now returned with Silas, having probably joined him before he left Macedonia.——This account of the matter seems more probable, than that of Mr. Cradock and some others, who suppose that both Silas and Timothy came from Berœa to Paul at Athens, and that, after Timothy had been sent to Thessalonica, and brought the good tidings referred to, both he and Silas were sent from Athens to Macedonia, and were appointed to meet Paul at Corinth, which seems *multiplying journies* without proof or necessity.

f *Was borne away* by an unusual impulse *in* [*his*] *spirit.*] Heinsius and some others think that the phrase συνειχετο τω πνευματι means *he was borne away* by an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit of God, the agency of which in this matter I readily acknowledge, but apprehend the phrase here used rather refers to the *effect that agency produced.* Compare ver. 25. chap. xix. 21. Rom. xii. 11. for the expression, and for the effect, Jer. xx. 8, 9. Amos iii. 8.

g *Into*

SECT. xli.

And going out from thence, he went into the house of one whose name was *called Justus*[g]; who was *a worshipper of* the true *God*, though not a complete Jew by profession, and *whose house was adjoining to the synagogue*; and there he taught.

Acts XVIII. 7

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, name Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 *But* though he did not succeed to his wish in what he delivered to the Jews, yet his labours among them were not entirely ineffectual; and it was particularly remarkable, that *Crispus the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord with all his house:* (Compare 1 Cor. i. 14.) *And many* also *of the Corinthians, hearing* not only the report of his conversion, but the discourse of the apostle, found the conviction which it produced so powerful, that they *believed*; *and* in token of their full resolution to adhere to the gospel, whatever extremities might arise, *were baptized*, and thereby entered into the Christian church, and settled in it.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house: and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

9 At this time Paul, conscious of many imperfections attending his person and address, was discouraged in a view of the learning, politeness, and grandeur, of many Gentile inhabitants of the city to whom he was to speak, so that he was, as he himself expresses it, "among them in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; (1 Cor. ii. 3;) and these alarms were much increased by the violent assaults which had lately been made upon him in other places through which he had passed, and the contempt with which he had generally been treated. *But the Lord* Jesus Christ interposed in a very gracious manner, and *said to Paul by a vision in the night, Fear not* to go on with thy work even here, *but speak* my gospel boldly and courageously, *and do not keep silence* under any present discouragement, or future apprehension: *For I* myself, by my powerful and gracious presence *am* continually *with thee, and* will engage for it, that *no man shall fall upon thee to injure thee* here; *for I have much people in*

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace;

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

[g] *Into the house of one called Justus.*] It has been supposed, that Paul was denied the use and liberty of the *synagogue* by Sosthenes, who, when Crispus was expelled, was made governor of it. (*Fleming's Christology*, Vol. II. p. 28.) But Paul himself so solemnly broke off all farther treaty with the Jews in a public way, that we need seek no other reason for his choosing some other place for discoursing to the people, who might desire his instructions. Accordingly *he taught here*; but I see no proof at all of his *quitting his lodgings* with Aquila, and therefore no need of inquiring (as some have done,) what was his reason for doing it.

in this city[h] and am determined by my grace to make thy ministry successful among many, by whom thou art ready to apprehend it will be despised.

11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

11 *And* encouraged by this assurance in the fidelity and security of which *he* firmly confided, Paul did, as it were, pitch his tent at Corinth, and *sat down* [*there*] for *a year and six months*[i]; *teaching the word of God among them* with all freedom, though with deep humility, and maintaining himself by the work of his own hands.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat,

12 And by the divine blessing on his diligent and pious labours, which he so generously gave them, a most flourishing church was planted at Corinth, "the members of which were filled with all knowledge and utterance, and came behind in no spiritual gifts, for the variety of which they were signally remarkable. (Compare 1 Cor. i. 5, 7.) *But* so glorious a progress of the gospel here could not fail of exciting the opposition of its enemies; and accordingly, when *Gallio was proconsul of Achaia*[k], during the residence that he made at Corinth, *the Jews*, being now resolved to bear no longer, *made an assault upon Paul with one consent, and brought him before the tribunal* of that magistrate, *Saying* in the most clamorous and furious manner,

13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship

This

h *I have much people in this city.*] I cannot think with Limborch and Dr. Benson, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 240,) that *virtuous* and *well disposed Heathens*, as such, are here called *the people of Christ*, or have the character elsewhere of *his sheep*, (John x. 16, 26,) but rather, that the expression takes in *all who should*, according to the gracious purposes of Christ, *be converted to Christianity*, whatever their tempers then were, even not excepting those *very vicious, ill-disposed, corrupt persons*, whose character in their *unregenerate state* is described in such strong terms, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11, where the *apostle* speaks of what they were, before they were converted.

i *Sat down there a year and six months.*] During this time he wrote his *First Epistle to the Thessalonians*, (1 Thess. iii. 1—6, compared with Acts xviii. 5,) which seems to have been *the earliest* of those which occur in the *New Testament*, and quickly after it, his *Second*.—Lord Barrington also thinks, that from hence he wrote his *Epistle to the Galatians*, which seems probable, as he refers there to his having been *but lately* among them, (Gal. i. 6; iii. 1, 3; iv. 15;) and yet hints nothing of his having been there *more than once*; so that it seems to refer to the journey mentioned, Acts xvi. 6. (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract*, p. 31,) and to have been *before that* mentioned in the 23d *verse* of *this chapter*.

k *When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia.*] See *note* i on chap. xiii. 8, p. 91.——Dr. Lardner justly observes, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 1, § 12, Vol. I p. 55—57,) that this is also another instance of the exact *propriety*, with which St. Luke expresses himself; for though the province of Achaia, which comprehended all the rest of Greece, had a more various fortune than that of Cyprus, and frequently changed its form of government, yet *A D.* 44, (which is generally supposed to have been about eight years before this event,) it was restored to *the senate*, and so became *proconsular*.—It is generally thought this Gallio was *elder brother* to the famous L. Annæus Seneca, the moral philosopher, who was preceptor to Nero, of which, as Mr. Biscoe shews, there is great probability; *Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 3, p. 57, 58.

SECT. XLI.

Acts XVIII.

This turbulent *fellow* is the author of unsufferable mischiefs here, and all over the country, for he *persuades men to worship God* in a manner directly *contrary to* that which *the law* re-
13 quires and appoints; and so would introduce corruptions in religion, and to the utmost of his power would endeavour to subvert it.

worship God contrary to the law.

14 *And when Paul would have opened his mouth*, and was about to have spoken in his own defence, *Gallio* would not give him the trouble of making an apology for what he did not look upon to come within his cognizance; but prevented him, and *said to the Jews*, *If it were an act of injustice, or* any *mischievous licentiousness*, *O ye Jews*, with which you charged the person you have now brought before me, *it were* but *reasonable*, as it is my office to guard the public peace, not only that *I should bear with you* in this prosecution, though managed indeed with some excess of eagerness, but also that on proper proof I should exert the power with which I am invested, to punish the offender in pro-
15 portion to his crime. *But if it be a question concerning* the propriety of *words and names*[1] as whether the person whom he so highly extols should be called your Messiah or not, *and* whether God is to be worshipped in the way required by *the law*, *which is* received *among you* as divine; or what regard is due to any particular ceremony of it; *see* [*to it*] in your own way, and settle it how you will among *yourselves*; *for I* know the design of my office too well to interfere on such an occasion, and *will be no judge of these matters* which are so foreign
16 to it. *And* with this wise and determinate answer, to which he adhered notwithstanding all their clamorous importunity, *he drove them away from the tribunal*, and proceeded to other business.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you;

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And he drove them from the judgment-seat.

17 *And all the* croud of *Greeks* who were present, perceiving how little favour the Jews found from the court in this tumultuous and vexatious suit

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of

1 *A question concerning words and names.*] This wise and equitable magistrate, for such it appears by the ancient writers that he was, (see *Grotius in loc.* and *Dr. Benson*, Vol. II. p. 126,) seems to have *heard the accusation* which the Jews brought, and to have perceived by it, that *the dispute* was, whether Christ was to be called *the Messiah*, and whether *the Mosaic law* were to be imposed on *all who worshipped the true God*; and therefore (as the author I mentioned last well observes,) he had more honour and generosity, then to make Paul answer under the notion of *a criminal*, when by the *Roman law* the matter did not come within his cognizance, and there was nothing criminal in the charge.

m It

of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat: and Gallio cared for none of those things.

SECT. xli.

suit, in which they plainly saw that Paul was insulted for the regards he had expressed for them, *laid hold on Sosthenes the ruler of the* Jewish *synagogue*, whom they looked upon as the chief occasion of the prosecution, *and beat him* violently; and this was so near the place where the proconsul was sitting, that it might be said to be *before the* very *tribunal*, and under the judge's eye[m]: *But* though this were certainly an irregular proceeding, *Gallio did not concern himself* to interpose *at all in the affair*; for perceiving no great mischief was like to follow, he was willing, by his connivance, to leave so troublesome a plaintiff as Sosthenes, to feel some of the consequences of that confusion which his own bigotry and ill-nature had occasioned.

Acts XVIII. 17

IMPROVEMENT.

MUCH of the divine wisdom and goodness is seen in providing for those who are employed in the work of the gospel, *suitable associates* and companions in their labours; and particularly happy are they to whom God had been pleased to give, as to the pious Aquila, such a *companion* in the nearest relation of life, as may help them forward in the way to heaven, and may assist them in the service of religion, while they continue on earth. Much were the fatigues of Paul's life softened by the converse of *such friends*, who no doubt rendered *the common business of life* more pleasant, as well as *the work of the Lord* more delightful. Ver. 1, 2

We find them, while endeavouring to propagate the gospel, *maintaing themselves* (for reasons peculiar to that situation) *by the labour of their own hands*, and even Paul the apostle *wrought with them*; not because he had not *a right* to demand support, for he strenuously maintains *that right* at large, in his address to these very Corinthians, (1 Cor. ix. 1—14.) but to *shame* his mean-spirited *enemies*, who accused him of acting *on mercenary views*; and 3

[m] It might be said to be *before the very tribunal*, One cannot imagine, that Gallio so little understood the dignity of his office, as to suffer a person uncondemned to be *scourged* or *beaten with rods* in his immediate presence. I apprehend therefore, that, as neither the word μαστιγοω; nor ραβδιζω, is used, but τυπτω, whose signification is more general, the real case was, that just as Sosthenes came out of the court, which perhaps might be held *in some open place*, (see John xviii. 28, 29, Vol. VII. p. 736: and John xix. 13, with *note* [k] on that place, *ibid.* p. 395,) the mob *laid hold of him* in a riotous manner, *and beat him*, probably *with their fists*; and, though the noise of this tumult, and some flying report of *the assault on Sosthenes*, might reach Gallio's ear, while he sat on the dispatch of some other business, he did not seem to take any notice of it for the reasons suggested in the *paraphrase*.

SECT. XII. and because he thought in his conscience, on some other accounts, that *his fidelity to Christ* would be so much the more apparent, and *his labours* by this means so much the more successful. And what *faithful minister*, who in his conscience apprehended that to be the case, would not *choose to act* as he did?

4 In the mean time, he was engaged as usual *every sabbath-day*, in discoursing to *the Jews*, and in demonstrating to them the truth of the gospel; and it is pleasant and edifying to observe, with what earnestness he applied himself to do it: But *their inveterate prejudices* prevailed over all the cogency of his demonstration, and all the warmth of his address; so that he was forced 6 at length to *give them up* as incorrigible. Yet let us observe *how* he gave them up; with what *grief*, mixed with *just indignation* at their folly and ingratitude; *shaking his garment*, and *saying*, *Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean.*——Thus are impenitent unbelievers *their own murtherers*; they bring upon themselves even *the blood of their own souls*; Grievous it is that it should *rest upon them*; but absolutely necessary that *we*, who are *the messengers of God* to them, should take heed, that if *they must* after all *bleed* by the sword of divine justice, *we ourselves* may at least be found *pure*; for terrible beyond expression would it be, if by our treachery or neglect *their blood should be required at our hand.*

9, 10 The apostle's *success among the Gentiles* raised new opposition and *his infirmities* frequently occasioned returning fears: But how 29 graciously did *our Lord* interpose for his encouragement and support, assuring him of *his protection*, and promising him *yet more abundant success!* Blessed Jesus, *thy grace was sufficient* even *for this thy servant*, amidst all the labours of the *ministerial* and *apostolical office*, amidst all the *internal* as well as *external difficulties* he had to encounter in the discharge of it! (2 Cor. xii. 9.) May *that grace* be imparted *to us*; and may it appear that *thou hast much people*, wherever thou fixest *the bounds of our habitation*, and the sphere of *our ministry!*

The tumultuous *rage of the Jews* is nothing surprising, for we have been accustomed often to read of it; but the *prudence* and 12 *moderation* of Gallio is truly amiable: That wise Roman well knew the extent of *his office* as *a magistrate*, and was aware that 14, 15 it gave him no title, no pretence, to dictate in *matters of conscience*, or to restrain men's *religious liberties*, so long as they abstained from *injustice* or *mischievous licentiousness*, by which the public peace might be disturbed, and the rights of society invaded. May God give to *all the magistrates of the earth* such a spirit! and *the gospel*, under the influences of divine grace, will soon become *an universal religion*, and shew the world how little need it has of being

ing *supported by civil penalties*; to which *those* are generally most ready to have recourse, who, like *these Jews*, are confounded by fair argument. SECT. XLII.

SECT. XLII.

Paul departs from Corinth, and, calling at Ephesus by the way, goes to Jerusalem: He afterwards sets out from Antioch on another progress, and visits the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. Apollos preaches at Ephesus, and being farther instructed in the Christian doctrine goes to Achaia. Acts XVIII. 18, *to the end.*

Acts XVIII. 18.

AND Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea; for he had a vow.

Acts XVIII. 18.

THUS the tumultuous opposition that was raised at Corinth by the Jews, against the progress of the gospel, was appeased; *and Paul still continued there for a considerable time* after it; *and* [*then*] *taking leave of the brethren*, with whom he had made so long and comfortable an abode, he *sailed* from *thence* in his return *for Syria, and* took along *with him* his two intimate friends *Priscilla and Aquila; having shaved his head at* the port of *Cenchrea* in the neighbourhood of Corinth, before he began his voyage, *for he had* made *a vow* of doing it, on account of some extraordinary deliverance received[a]; and there he performed it. SECT. XLII. Acts XVIII. 18

And

[a] *Having shaved his head at Cenchrea, for he had a vow.*] Grotius, Heinsius, Dr. Hammond and Witsius, (*Meletem.* p. 99—101,) think this clause refers to Aquila who was mentioned immediately before; and some of them suppose that he and his wife Priscilla were *left*, not *at* Ephesus, but *at* Cenchrea; and Chrysostom interpreted the clause thus. But with due deference to such great names, *I* must say, that, though it be not certainly determined by *the original*, it seems much more probable from the construction, that κειρασθαι and κλιθη must refer to the same person, that is, Paul; nor is there any weight in what some have suggested, that Aquila is mentioned here *after* his wife Priscilla, to shew that it was *he* that *shaved his head*, since they are mentioned *thrice* by the apostle Paul in his epistles, (Rom xvi. 3. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. 2 Tim. iv. 19,) and where there could be no such reason to induce him to it, he has *twice* named Priscilla first; and, as it appears from ver. 26, that Aquila and Priscilla were at Ephesus when Apollos was there, and from ver. 18, that they set out with Paul from Corinth to make the intended voyage in his company, it is most likely, they went now to Ephesus, and were *not left at Cenchrea*.——As for *this vow*, it is justly observed by Salmasius, that it could not be *a vow of Nazariteship*, for then *the hair* must have been *burnt in the temple* under the caldron in which the *peace-offerings* were boiled. (Num. vi. 18.) Petit thinks, the mention of *his vow* relates only to *Paul's return to Judea*, and not at all to *his shaving his head*, which words he would include in a parenthesis, supposing *the Jews at Corinth wore their hair long*, directly contrary to 1 Cor. xi. 14. I rather think, *his vow* was an expression of *gratitude* for the divine goodness, in preserving him from such imminent dangers during his long abode here; but, whether he *now cut off his hair*, vowing from this time *to let it grow* till he came to Jerusalem, or whether some *accidental pollution* befel him here, which obliged him to do it, that he might begin *the day of his purification* again, or whether his vow *terminated here*, I cannot certainly say: Yet *the last* seems to me most probable; for

SECT. xlii.

Acts XVIII.

And setting sail from Cenchrea *he arrived at Ephesus, and there he* parted with Aquila and Priscilla, and *left them* behind him[b], having made but a very short stay in that place; *but* during that time *he himself entered into the synagogue* on the sabbath which he spent there, *and reasoned with the Jews* upon the great subject of Jesus being the Messiah. *And though they* were desirous of hearing more upon this head, and therefore *intreated him to have stayed longer with them*, yet *he did not consent* to do it: *But took his leave of them, saying, It is necessary for me by all means to celebrate the approaching feast* of the passover *at Jerusalem*[c]; *but* when I have dispatched my business there, *I will turn my course to you again, God willing*, and make as long an abode amongst you as Providence shall permit. *And* so *he set sail from Ephesus.*

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not.

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

And after a safe and prosperous voyage *landing at* the port of *Cæsarea, he went up* immediately to Jerusalem, and there attended at the feast: *And having* with great tenderness *saluted the church* there, and expressed his kindness and affection to it, and delivered the alms which he had brought from the churches of the Gentiles, *he* afterwards *went down* from thence *to Antioch* in Syria, where he had formerly made so long a stay, and where there was so flourishing a Christian church.

22 And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

And having spent some time [*there,*] *he* again set out upon another progress, and *departed* from Antioch, *going through the country of Galatia*

23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over

for the expression, *he had a vow*, seems not to agree with the supposition of *his beginning it here*; nor could he on any *accidental pollution* have renewed his purification *as a Nazarite* any where but *at the temple*. (Num. vi. 9, 10.) I imagine therefore, that (unless as Grotius and Dr. Lardner suppose, the Jews allowed themselves *great liberties* in this matter, when in foreign countries,) *Mephibosheth's vow* during David's exile (2 Sam. xix. 24,) might more nearly resemble *this of Paul*. Spencer has shewn in his excellent dissertation on the *Nazarite's vow*, (*De Leg. Heb. lib.* iii. *cap.* 6, § 1,) that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, had such a custom. Dr. Lardner thinks, that Paul's reason for hastening to Jerusalem was, that he might *accomplish his vow*; but I see not how that could be any reason, why he should *keep the feast there*, since *the vow* might have been *accomplished*, either before or after it. (See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Book I. chap. 9, § 7, Vol. I. p. 465—472.)

b *And there he left them.*] It is observable, that the *Syriac Version* inserts this clause afterwards in ver. 21, which seems its most natural place: "And he left Aquila and Priscilla there, and sailed from Ephesus."

c *It is necessary for me by all means*, &c.] This was not from any apprehension, that he was *obliged in conscience* to celebrate *the Jewish feasts*, (compare Rom. xiv. 5. Gal. iv. 10, 11. Col. ii. 16.) but because he desired to seize that opportunity of meeting a great number of his countrymen at Jerusalem, to whom he might preach the gospel, or whom, if already converted, he might farther instruct, or might remove the prejudices that were groundlessly imbibed against him.

d *Going*

over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

latia and Phrygia in an orderly and regular *manner*[d], so as to take in all the places that lay in his way, where he had formerly preached the gospel; *confirming all the disciples* that he met with there in their adherence to the gospel, 23 whatever opposition and difficulty might arise: And his presence was most welcome to all their churches, who could not but greatly rejoice to see him amongst them, who as a father had begotten them in Jesus Christ through the gospel. (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 15.)

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Now while he was thus employed in those 24 parts, *a certain Jew whose name was Apollos, a native of Alexandria* in Egypt, *an eloquent man, [and] powerful in the scriptures* of the Old Testament, which he had diligently studied, and had an excellent faculty of expounding, *came to Ephesus. This person was* in some measure

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

already *instructed in the way of the Lord; and* 25 *being fervent in spirit*, and earnestly desirous to promote the progress of the truth, and the conversion of souls, *he spake and taught the things of the Lord with great accuracy* and exactness, to the best of his knowledge; though as yet he had but an imperfect notion of the gospel, *being only acquainted with the baptism of John*[e]; so that he insisted upon the doctrine of repentance, and faith in a Messiah who was quickly to be revealed, for the reception of whom he shewed that it was necessary they

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Whom when

should have their hearts prepared. *And* to 26 this purpose *he began to speak boldly in the synagogue*, pleading the cause of God and real vital religion, with an earnestness becoming the importance

[d] *Going through the country of Galatia, and Phrygia,* &c.] Probably he passed through part of Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Lycaonia, which all lay in his way from Antioch. As this would take him up a great deal of time, most *commentators* (I think very reasonably,) allow *four years for this journey*, including his stay at Ephesus; that is, from the year 54 to 58.—Coming to Galatia, he gave those directions concerning *charitable contributions*, referred to 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, and I shall afterwards mention the reasons which convince me, that he wrote his *First Epistle to the Corinthians* in this period, that is, probably during his stay at Ephesus. See note [a] on Acts xix. 21, § 44.

[e] *Being only acquainted with the baptism of John.*] It is generally supposed, he had been in Judea when John was baptizing, and having been *baptized by him* into the faith of *a Messiah shortly to appear*, on hearing something more of the gospel, he *believed in Christ* under that character, but had not yet been *baptized in the name of Christ*, nor received *the gifts of the Spirit*, which were often miraculously communicated in that ordinance. (See *Cradock's Apost. Hist.* p. 127.) If this was indeed the case, as *John the Baptist* was *beheaded* more than *twenty years* before this time, Apollos could not now be, as is generally supposed, though I think no where asserted, *a young man*; and consequently, his condescension in submitting to the instructions of these *private Christians* is the more remarkable, and the more amiable.

SECT. xlii.

Acts XVIII.

portance of the subject, as well as freely reproving the Jews for those evils which were so commonly to be found among them, and battering down those vain hopes which, as the seed
26 of Abraham and disciples of Moses, they were so ready to entertain. *And Aquila and Priscilla*, being then at Ephesus, and *hearing him* express so upright and so good a spirit, were desirous to promote his further improvement in knowledge and usefulness; and accordingly they *took him* with them *to their house, and* there *explained to him the way of God in a more* complete and *perfect manner.*

when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 *And* shortly after, *when he intended to go over to Achaia*, that he might preach the word at Corinth and other places in that province, *the brethren* of Ephesus *wrote to the disciples* there, *exhorting them to receive him* with all affection and respect, as a person whose character well deserved it: *And being arrived there, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace*[t], and was eminently serviceable in establishing and confirming those who had embraced the gospel.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

28 *For he strenuously debated with the Jews*, and that *in* the most *public* manner, and upon all proper occasions; making it evident, and clearly *shewing by the scriptures*, not only that a glorious spiritual deliverer was there foretold, but *that Jesus* of Nazareth, though so ungratefully treated by their rulers at Jerusalem, was and *is* indeed *the* only true *Messiah*, so that the salvation of men depends upon receiving and submitting to him.

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.

IMPROVE-

[t] *He greatly helped those who had believed through grace.*] Mr. L'Enfant and Limborch render it, "He was, through the grace of God, a great help to those that had received the faith:" But this, though I think it don't greatly affect the sense, seems *an unnecessary transposition.* The best comment on these words is what we are told elsewhere, (1 Cor. iii. 6,) "Paul planted, and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." It is indeed true, both that *the Corinthians had believed through grace*, and that *through Grace Apollos helped them:* The latter strongly implies the former; and the *original words* may possibly speak either: But the transposition fixes them, which I think should not be done; and fixes them, if I mistake not, to the less probable sense. It appears from many passages in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, that several of the Christians there, charmed with the eloquence of Apollos, were ready to set him up as *the head of a party*, and to make invidious and foolish *comparisons* between him and *the apostle*, who had been *their father in Christ*, and who, though he might have *less volubility of speech*, was on the most important accounts *far superior* to this eloquent and zealous teacher. (See 1 Cor. i. 12. iii. 4—8, 21, 22. iv. 6.) Yet this occasioned *no breach* between Paul and Apollos; the latter of which plainly appears to have come to Ephesus when Paul returned thither, and to have *declined* going to Corinth again, even when Paul would have persuaded him to it; probably to avoid any the remotest appearance of desiring to countenance *any party*, that might have been formed in his own favour. 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy was *the church* in these unwearied labours of Paul! And how happy was Paul in those repeated opportunities, and in that health and spirit which God gave him, to undertake and to go through with such labours! Happy in *preaching Christ* to so many, to whom he was before unknown! Happy in beholding the blessed fruits of his labour, and *visiting the churches* he had *formerly planted* in one province and another, and which in this intermediate space was grown up to some maturity! Prudent likewise, in such a concern to *water those plants* by renewed instruction: So let *gospel-ministers* cherish the divine life in those souls where they have been instrumental to produce it; ever remembering, that it is a matter of so great importance as well deserves our repeated care and our renewed labours. ACT. xviii. Ver. 18--28

Well was it also for *the churches*, that such a promising and hopeful fellow-labourer as Apollos was raised up *to him*, and to *them*. To be *fervent* and *courageous in spirit*, to be *eloquent* and *mighty in the Scriptures*, are happy talents for such as are to be *devoted to the ministry*. May all that enter on this work among us, come forth with *a zeal* and *courage* like his; and I must add, may they also come forth with *an humility* like that which, in Apollos, adorned all those bright talents with which he was endowed! What he *knew*, he zealously *taught*; what he *did not know*, he was willing and ready thankfully to *learn*; and that not only from the mouth of *an apostle*, but of *a fellow-christian* in inferior life; from Aquila, yea and from Priscilla too. Since God had given that wise and pious *woman* to know *the way of the Lord*, by longer experience and to greater perfection than he, Apollos, amidst all his popularity and applause, was willing to become *her disciple*; and to learn from her *in private discourses*, those evangelical lessons which decency did not permit *her* to give, or *him* to receive, *in public assemblies*. 24 25 26

It was prudent in Apollos to take, as well as just in *the brethren* to grant, proper *letters of recommendation*, when he *was going* to the *churches* in Achaia, where he was a stranger; and well did he answer *this recommendation*, and make himself known amongst them by valuable services: *Mighty* as he was *in the scriptures* of the *Old Testament*, he might well *demonstrate from them* to the Jews at Corinth, that Jesus *was the Messiah*; and happy would it have been for *the church* and *the synagogue* there, had they known *no distinguishing name* but his: Nevertheless, *one said, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos.* (1 Cor. iii. 4.) 27, 28

We

SECT. XLII. We may reasonably hope, that this zealous *evangelist* expressed the same displeasure which the holy *apostle* himself did on such an occasion; and laboured with all his might to impress them with the thought, that *neither he that planted nor he that watered* was *any thing, but God* who *gave the increase* to both. May it be impressed deeper on the hearts both of *ministers* and *people*, that *all the glory* may be rendered *to him* from whom all our gifts, and graces, and successes proceed.

SECT. XLIII.

Paul in his circuit coming to Ephesus, instructs some of John's disciples whom he found there, performs extraordinary miracles, and preaches the word with great success. Acts XIX. 1—20.

Acts XIX. 1.

SECT. XLIII. Acts XIX. 1. NOW *it came to pass, that while* the eloquent *Apollos*, of whom we have just been speaking, *was at Corinth*, and was entertaining them there with the charms of his oratory as well as the strength of his reasoning, *Paul having passed* (as was observed before, chap. xviii. 23) *through* Galatia and Phrygia, and visited *the upper parts* of the Lesser Asia, *came to* the celebrated city of *Ephesus*, according to his promise, (chap. xviii. 19—21,) with a purpose of making some stay in it; *and finding* [*there*] *some disciples*, in whom he did not observe any of those extraordinary gifts which he had discovered in, or communicated to, so many others[a], *He said unto them, Have ye as yet on your believing received the Holy Spirit?* and have the gifts that are bestowed by the effusion of the Spirit been imparted to you? *And they* strangely *replied to him,*

Acts XIX. 1. AND it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And

a *Finding there some disciples*, &c.] Beza has a singular opinion concerning these persons. He thinks, they were almost *the whole body of Christians* at Ephesus, and that, as Paul found they had *none among them* who appeared to have received *the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit*, (of which gifts indeed they had never so much as heard,) he imparted them *to twelve* of the number, perhaps intending them for stations of some peculiar eminence in the church. But this account of the matter must, I think, appear very improbable, when it is considered, that Aquila and Priscilla, who came from the Corinthian *church*, so eminent for its *spiritual gifts*, had made some abode at Ephesus, and that Apollos, after he had profited by their instructions, would probably *preach in the synagogue* there, before he left the place; (chap. xviii. 19, 25, 26,) which if he did, it can never be imagined he would be silent on this head. I conclude therefore, these *twelve men* were *pious Jews*, who, having *waited for the kingdom of God*, and being many years before *baptized* by John or some of *his disciples*, had, on receiving something of the evidence of Christianity, *believed in Jesus*, but, perhaps coming out of some remote country, had not enjoyed an opportunity before, of being instructed in any thing relating to *the Holy Spirit*, more than might be learned from the *Old Testament*.

b *And*

And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

him, Nay, we have not so much as heard of any such peculiar privilege under the present dispensation, and are so far from having been partakers of it, that we know not whether any have been favoured with this extraordinary effusion, or *whether there be any Holy Spirit* given now or no. *And* Paul was so surprised at this,

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

3 that *he said to them, Into what then were you baptized*, if you have never heard of what is so well known with relation to the Holy Spirit? for Christians are appointed at their first admission into the church to be baptized in his name, as well as in that of the Father and of the Son, and the great promise of the gospel gives them an assurance of the effusion of the Spirit. *But they said*, We were only baptized *into John's baptism*, having been in Judea about the time of his ministry; and so we were taught to look for a Messiah quickly to be revealed, and hearing what was testified of Jesus with proper credentials, we embraced him and his religion. *And* upon this *Paul said, John indeed administered the baptism of repentance*, and came to prepare the way of the Lord; *telling the people, that they should believe in him that was to come after him, that is, in Jesus Christ*, whose servant he professed himself to be, and so much inferior to him, as not to be worthy to loose or to bear his shoes: It is highly congruous, therefore, to the intention and design of John's ministry, now to profess your faith with all solemnity in that Jesus to whom he afterwards bore such express and repeated testimonies. *And hearing* [*this*], their hearts were so impressed with what he said, that *they* joyfully submitted to the direction and advice of the apostle, and *were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus*[b]. *And* immediately

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

4

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

5

6 And when Paul had

6

[b] *And hearing this, they were baptized*, &c.] Mr. L'Enfant has followed the opinion of many great critics, in rendering this verse, as a continuance of *Paul's discourse*, and not as the words of Luke, as if it had been said, "*John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance*, &c. *but they who heard him*, and paid a proper regard to his ministry, were, in effect, *baptized into the name of Jesus*, since he was the Messiah, whom John spake of as *shortly to appear*;" and the correspondence, which is every where else said to be found between the *particles* μεν and δε, is urged as a demonstration, that the 4th and 5th verses must make *one continued sentence*. The learned Beza expresses himself with an unusual confidence on this head, and concludes, as I think all who follow this interpretation do, that Paul did not baptize these converts anew, but only declared his acquiescense in the *sufficiency of the baptism* they had already received, by *imparting to them the gifts of the Spirit*. But I think it evident, beyond all dispute, that the baptism of John and of Christ were in their own nature *quite different*, and that it is plain in fact, that, when persons were *converted to christianity*, they were *baptised of course*, without inquiring whether they *had*,

SECT. XLIII.

Acts XIX.

immediately after the administration of this solemn ordinance, *Paul, laying [his] hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they* 6 *spake with* new *tongues*, which they had never learnt or understood before, *and prophesied* in such a manner to the edification of the church, as plainly shewed they were enriched at once in 7 all utterance and in all knowledge. *And they were in all about twelve men*, who had the happiness of being thus miraculously furnished with the gifts of the Spirit.

had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 *And* Paul, as *he* was used to do in other places, *went into the synagogue* of the Jews at Ephesus, *and discoursed with* great *boldness* and freedom, *disputing for the space of three months*[c], with all that opposed him, *and* strongly *evincing the things which related to the kingdom of God*, erected in the world under Jesus the Messiah.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 *But as some* of the Jews *were hardened, and would not believe*, but still continued in their infidelity and rebellion, *speaking reproachfully of the way* of salvation which the apostle taught, *before the multitude*, and doing their utmost to inspire them with a contempt for it, *he departed from them, and separated the disciples* he had made, *disputing daily* for the time to come with all those who debated his doctrine *in the school* 10 *of one Tyrannus*[d]. *And this was done* by Paul, and

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued

had, or *had not* received *the baptism of John*, which we know vast numbers did, (Mat. iii. 5, 6.) who probably afterwards received *christian baptism*. Compare Acts ii. 38—41. iv. 4. vi. 7. And therefore, if I were assured the construction of these *two verses* were *that* which these gentlemen insist upon, I should interpret the 5th verse in a sense quite contrary to theirs, as if it was said, "But they who paid a due regard to John, when they came more explicitly to understand who *the promised Messiah* was, *were baptized into the name of Jesus*, as you therefore must be, in order to a regular admittance into his church:" And then I should suppose, Luke, having given this intimation of *the baptism of these converts*, which must of course follow such a declaration of Paul, left us to *collect that* for ourselves, and only mentioned *the communication of miraculous gifts to them* on their being thus baptized. But on the whole,——as the expression is not οι δε ακουσαντες, but ακουσαντες, δε—as αυτοις ver. 6. seems so plainly to refer to the persons just before said to be *baptized*, and as it is so natural to suppose, that Luke should *not omit* to mention *the baptism of these men*, I rather conclude, that there is *an ellipsis* in the 4th verse, (though I own it not a very common one,) so that τω λαω λεγων is put for λεγων δε τω λαω (as if the expression were, *But he said to the people* at the same time, *that they should believe in Jesus*;) and the *particle* δε might more probably be *omitted by Luke*, as it is used *three times* besides, in these *three verses*.

c *For the space of three months.*] The late Lord Barrington supposes, (*Miscel. Sacr. Abstract*, p. 33.) that, after Paul had been some time at Ephesus, he visited the neighbouring towns of Asia, and then returned to Ephesus again.——And it seems not improbable, that the foundation of some others of the seven churches in Asia, so particularly favoured with the *Epistles of our Lord*, might now be laid: Compare ver. 10.

d *In the school of one Tyrannus.*] I cannot think there is any reason to conclude, as Sir Norton Knatchbull does out of regard to the *article* τινος that the word τυραννος expresses the rank rather than the

SECT. xliii.

Acts XIX. 10.

nued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

and was his daily practice *for the space of two years* [e]; *so that all the inhabitants of* the neighbouring province of *Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord Jesus*, though for some peculiar reason he had been forbidden to preach it there in his former journey. (Chap. xvi. 6.)

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

11 *And* to add the greater efficacy and success to this important doctrine, *God wrought* many *extraordinary* and uncommon *miracles by the hands of Paul; So that*, besides his curing those that

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

12 were brought to him, *handkerchiefs or aprons* [f] *were carried from his body to those that were sick* at a distance, *and* presently upon their touching them, *the diseases* they were troubled with, however threatening or inveterate they were, *removed from them, and the evil spirits* themselves *came out of them* that were possessed; which soon raised the reputation of the apostles to a very high degree, and added the authority of a divine attestation to what he taught the Ephesians. *And*

the name of the person, and therefore to render it, "A certain nobleman, or ruler of the city," since it is so evident, that in Luke's writings τις is often added to *a proper name*. Compare Acts xxi. 16. xxii. 12. xxiv. 1. xxv. 19.—It seems a groundless conceit, that this was the Tyrannus, mentioned by Suidas, who wrote on popular seditions, or that it refers (as others think, to one of the descendants of Androclus, mentioned by Strabo, who had *an hereditary title* in his family. (*Strab. Geogr. lib.* xiv. *init.*) The name might be frequent among them, as King is amongst us; and this Tyrannus might very probably be a converted Jew, and the school referred to, a kind of *beth-midrash*, or divinity-hall, designed for reading *theological lectures*, as Dr. Lightfoot supposes, *Chron. in loc.*

e *This was done for the space of two years.*] The very learned and ingenious Mr. Boyse argues from chap. xx. 31. that Paul spent *three years* at Ephesus and in the neighbouring towns of Asia, and therefore concludes, that this clause expresses the time between the end of the *three months*, ver. 8. and his sending Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, ver. 22. but that, as he stayed *nine months longer* in these parts, towards the end of which he returned to Ephesus, they might perhaps, both return thither before he quitted it, and consequently, that he might have left Timothy at Ephesus, when he was driven from thence, (chap. xx. 1.) and so have written his *First Epistle* to him before the meeting at Miletus, chap. xx. 17. (See *Mr. Boyse of Episcopacy*, p. 335.)—I must add here, that to render Ελληνας, (i. e, Greeks,) at the end of this verse, *proselytes*, is an unexampled boldness in *a late translator*, and quite misrepresents the sense of the passage.

f *Handkerchiefs, or aprons, σουδαρια η σιμικινθια.*] These two *Latin words*, for such they originally are, have been differently rendered: but the *etymology* of *the first* plainly determines it to signify *a piece of linen*, with which the sweat was wiped from the face, and though *the latter* may possibly signify *drawers*, which is the interpretation preferred by Calmet, (*Disser.* Vol. II. p. 232.) yet as I do not find *the ancients* wore *such a habit*, and as it may most literally be rendered *things girt half round the waist*, I choose, with Grotius, and our translators, to use the word *aprons*; for though aprons made no part of the *ordinary dress* of the Greeks, yet they might very probably have been used, both by men and women, to *preserve their clothes*, while engaged in any kind of work that might endanger the spoiling them.—It is justly observed by many writers, that these cures wrought upon *absent persons*, some of them perhaps at a considerable distance from Ephesus, might conduce greatly to the *success of the gospel* among those, whose faces Paul had not himself seen.

g *Vagabond*

SECT. xliii.

Acts XIX. 13. *And* while he abode there, *some of the vagabond Jews* [*who were*] professed *exorcists*, and pretended to a power of expelling dæmons [g], *undertook to name the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits*, and were possessed by them, *saying, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preaches*, to come out of those whom 14 you now possess. *And* so it was, that *there were seven sons of* [*one*] *Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did this*, desirous of the honour or profit which they thought would redound from such cures, and imagining there was some secret charm in the name of Jesus, to which these 15 infernal agents would submit. *But the evil spirit answering* their adjuration with contempt, boldly *said* [h], *Jesus I know* to my cost, *and Paul I know* as his appointed servant, whose power I cannot resist; *but who are ye*, that pretend thus without any authority to command me in 16 that tremendous name? *And the man in whom the evil spirit was sprung upon them, and* quickly *getting master of them* all, *prevailed against them* to such a degree as to tear off their clothes from their backs, and beat them with great violence, *so that they fled out of that house* in which they had attempted to cure, *naked and wounded*, and became public spectacles of scorn and derision, in a city where these things were peculiarly regarded.

17 *And this was* done in such a public manner, that it soon became *known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: and* they were so affected with the thought of so remarkable and awful an occurrence, that great *fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus* 18 *was magnified. And* those who had formerly been professors of unwarrantable arts, which they

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed

g *Vagabond Jews, who were exorcists.*] Dr. Whitby, Mr. Biscoe, (at *Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 6. p. 281, *& seq.*) and several other *critics*, have produced many passages from Irenæus, Origin, Epiphanius, and Josephus, to prove that several of the Jews about this age pretended to a power of *casting out dæmons*, particular by some *arts* and *charms* derived from Solomon. See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* viii. *cap.* 2. § 5. I do not here use the word *conjurers*, as some have done, because, whatever affinity it has with the etymology of *exorcists* it expresses, among us, those who act in combination with *infernal spirits*, rather than such as adjure them by *a divine name*.

h *The evil spirit answering*, &c.] Not to insist on the demonstration arising from this story, that *this dæmoniac* was not merely *a lunatic*, we may observe, that *the evil spirit*, under whose operation this man was seems either to have been *compelled* by a superior power to bear *an unwilling testimony* to Jesus, or craftily to have intended by it to bring Paul into suspicion, as acting *in confederacy with himself*; and, if the latter of these were the case, God, as in other instances, over-ruled *this artifice* of Satan to the destruction of his own cause and kingdom.

i *Who*

believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

they had diligently studied, as the means of helping them to do extraordinary things by the power of magic, and the assistance of invisible agents, were now so sensible of their wickedness and folly, that *many of them who believed*, struck with this triumph of the evil spirit over the sons of Sceva, *came* of their own accord, *and* publicly *confessed and made a declaration of their* unlawful *deeds* of this kind. *And a considerable number* 19 *of those who had practised* magical and *curious arts*[i], to express their detestation of them, *bringing their books together, burnt them before all* who were present; *And* as it was observed that there were a great many of them which bore a high price in that place, *they computed the value of them, and found* that *it* amounted to *fifty thousand* drachmas, which were the [*pieces*] *of silver* most current in those parts[k]. *So powerfully did the word of the Lord grow and prevail*, 20 and so remarkable was the triumph of the gospel over all considerations of honour or interest, that could be opposed to it on this or on any other occasion.

SECT. xliii.

Acts XIX. 18.

19 Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS may *the word of God* still *grow and prevail* wherever it comes, and separate between the sinner and his sins, be they ever so customary, ever so reputable, ever so gainful: And thus may the flame of love and zeal *consume every snare* which hath detained the soul in a base captivity to it. Ver. 20, 19

In order to the production of so noble an effect, may those who are so indifferent to his sacred operations, as if they had *never yet heard that there was an Holy Spirit*, be filled with it, and be made obedient to it: And may they to whom *the mysteries of the gospel* are committed, *declare them boldly*, whoever may be *hardened*, whoever 2—6, 8, 9

i *Who had practised curious arts.*] Philostratus, Chrysostom, and a variety of *more ancient authors*, quoted by many, and especially by Mr. Biscoe, (at *Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 1, p. 290—293, have mentioned *the Ephesian letters*, meaning by them *the charms*, and other *arts of a magical kind*, which the inhabitants of that city professed; and, as these practices were in so much reputation there, it is no wonder, that *the books* that taught them, how contemptible soever they might be in themselves, should bear *a considerable price*.

k *Fifty thousand pieces of silver.*] If these be taken for *Jewish shekels*, and valued at *three shillings* each, (which are the principles of Dr. Benson's computation, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 149,) the sum will amount to 7500l. *Sterling*, or, setting it at *half a crown*, to 6250: But, as the *Attic drachm* seems to have been more frequently used among the Greeks, than any coin equal to the *Jewish shekel*, I think it more natural to compute by *that*, which, if with Dr. Prideaux we reckon it at 9d. reduces the sum to 1875l.

a *When*

SECT. XLIII.

whoever may *oppose*, and how *evil* soever some who boast of their knowledge of God may *speak of this way*.

11, 12 We cannot expect that *the miracles of Paul's days* should be renewed in ours, but we may humbly hope that the noblest *effects of his preaching* will be *renewed*; that *dead souls* will be quickened, the languishing revived, and *evil spirits cast out* from *men's minds*; where their possession is more fatal and dangerous than in *their bodies*.

13, 14 And God grant that none may ever *undertake to invoke the name of Jesus* upon such occasions, or to appear under the character of *his servants*, who have not cordially *believed in him them-*

15, 16 *selves*, and received their commission from him! We need not wonder if in such a case, like these *sons of Sceva* they meddle *to their own wounding*, and prove the means of *irritating* rather than *curing those disorders* which the influence of Satan has introduced, and which *the Spirit of Christ* alone can effectually remove.

SECT. XLIV.

Paul is driven from Ephesus, on occasion of a tumult which Demetrius raises, and the Chancellor prudently appeases. Acts XIX. 21, *to the end.*

SECT. XLIV.

Acts XIX. 21.

NOW after the extraordinary cures and conversions at Ephesus, which have been mentioned in the preceding section, *when these things were fulfilled*[a], *Paul*, who was much concerned about

Acts XIX. 21.

AFTER these things were ended, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through

[a] *When these things were fulfilled.*] Many events referred to in *the Epistles* happened during the period.—It is probable, that Philemon, a convert of Paul, (Philem. ver. 19,) and Epaphras, afterwards a minister of the church at Colossæ, were *converted* about this time. (Col. i. 4, 7, 8; ii. 1; iv. 12, 13.) The apostle was also *visited* by several Christians from neighbouring parts, during his abode here, particularly by Sosthenes and Apollos from Corinth, and by some of the family of Chloe, a woman as it seems of some figure there, (1 Cor. i. 1, 11,) as also by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, all from the same place; (1 Cor. xvi. 17,) and Onesiphorus, who afterwards visited him so affectionately at Rome, was, as Timothy had frequently opportunities of observing, *very serviceable* to the apostle here. (2 Tim. i. 16—18.) And there is great reason to believe, he wrote his *First Epistle to the Corinthians* from hence, 1 Cor. xvi. 8,) and about this time; for it is plain, that Aquila and Priscilla were then with him in Asia, (1 Cor. xvi. 19,) as they now were, (Acts xviii. 18, 19, 26,) that it was after Apollos had visited Corinth, had *watered Paul's plantation* there, and was returned to Ephesus again, (1 Cor. iii. 6; xvi, 8, 12,) and that it was when Paul himself, having lately given a charge to the *Galatian churches* on that head, (compare 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, with Acts xviii. 23,) intended a journey from Asia to the Macedonian and Corinthian churches, and was sending Timothy to prepare his way. (1 Cor. iv. 17, 19; xvi. 5, 10; compared with the verse now before us, and that which follows.)—Hence it appears, that no dependence can be had on the *spurious editions* at the *end of the Epistles*, which do not only tell us, that he wrote to the Galatians from Rome, contrary to the probability there is that he wrote it from

through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

about the spiritual welfare of his former converts, and very solicitous to promote the progress of the gospel, had thoughts of leaving Ephesus, and *purposed in spirit*[b], *that* first *passing through Macedonia and Achaia*, where he had planted so many flourishing churches some time ago, at Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and other places, *he would* then *go to Jerusalem; saying, After I have been there, it is necessary for me also to see Rome*, that I may bear my testimony to the gospel in that metropolis of the world: And accordingly Providence brought him thither, though in a manner something different from what he first intended. SECT. XLIV. Acts XIX. 21.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus: *but* he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

22 *And* in this view, *sending two of those that ministered to him*, namely, *Timothy and Erastus*[c], *into Macedonia*, to prepare his way, and to get their collection ready for the poor Christians in Judea, *he himself stayed some time* longer *in* that part of *Asia*, waiting for a convenient opportunity of following them.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

23 *And there happened about that time no small tumult, concerning that way* of worshipping God, and securing a happy immortality, which Paul taught.

24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silver-smith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small

24 *For* there was in the city *a man whose name was Demetrius*, by profession *a working silver smith*, and a man of considerable influence; for, *making* small *silver shrines*, which were models of the celebrated temple *of Diana* there[d], he employed a considerable number of men

from Corinth, (as was hinted before, *note* i on Acts xviii. 11,) but also affirm, in spite of his own declaration to the contrary, that he wrote the *First to the Corinthians* from Philippi.

b *Paul purposed in spirit,*] It is not certain from the *original*, εθετο εν τω πνευματι, whether this relate to a determination he was moved to by *the Holy Spirit*, by whom he was directed in his journies, or (as Beza and Grotius suppose,) to a purpose he formed in *his own mind*. But as we find that he delayed the execution of it, and was by several circumstances led to alter his intended course, and to continue longer in his progress than he first designed, it seems more reasonable to refer it to *his own spirit*; nor is it unusual to insert *the article*, where it only relates to *the human spirit*. (See Acts xvii. 16; Rom. i. 9; viii. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 11; v. 5; vi 20; Gal. vi. 18; Eph. iv. 23; *Gr.*) Accordingly Beza renders it, *Statuit apud se*, and Stephens, *Induxit in animum*.

c *Sending——Timothy and Erastus.*] Timothy was a person very proper to be employed on this occasion, not only on account of his excellent character, but also as he had formerly been in Macedonia with Paul, and had assisted in *planting the churches* there. (Acts, chap. xvi. and xvii.) Erastus, who was joined with him, was *chamberlain of Corinth*; Rom. xvi. 23,) and they were charged with a commission to promote *the collection*, which Paul was making, both in the European and Asiatic churches, (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 3; Gal. ii. 10,) for the *poor Christians* in Judea, which is afterwards so largely urged in the *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, (chap. viii. and ix.)

d *A working silver-smith, making silver shrines of Diana.*] Dr. Hammond long since gave it as his opinion, that these *shrines* were *little models* of this famous *temple*, probably something like those of the *church of the Holy Sepulchre* brought from Jerusalem; and Mr. Biscoe has added

SECT. xliv.

men under him, and *procured no small gain to the* several *artificers* by this means: *Whom* therefore *he* one day, upon a general summons,

Acts XIX. 25. *gathered together* in a great number, *with* all *the* inferior *workmen* who were *employed about this business; and* when they were met, he *said*, My friends, and all you honest *men* that now hear me, *you* very well *know that our maintenance* (which, thanks be to the gods, is a very liberal one) *arises from this manufacture* of mak-

26 ing silver shrines. *And* therefore I thought it proper to call you together, that we may unite our counsels for its security, against the danger that threatens the whole company, of which I am satisfied you cannot but be sensible: For *you* all *see and hear, that this Paul* of Tarsus, who has unhappily resided so long amongst us, *has persuaded great numbers of people, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all* the provinces of *Asia*, as they have occasionally visited us[e], *and has turned them aside* from the established religion, *saying, that they are not* true *deities*, nor worthy of being at all worshipped or regarded, *which are*

27 *made with hands*[f]: *So that*, if this be suffered any longer, *there is danger not only that this occupation of ours should be depreciated* and ruined, which must be the necessary consequence of his success, *but also that the* celebrated *temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her grandeur destroyed, whom* now *all Asia and the*

small gain unto the craftsmen:

25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, That they be no gods which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom

added many learned quotations to illustrate and confirm that opinion. (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. §. 3, p. 300—302.) See also *Raphel. ex. Herod.* p. 380; and *ex. Xen.* p. 175—177. Yet after all, the mention of *these models* is not so express, as absolutely to exclude Beza's conjecture, that the business of Demetrius might possibly be, *making a sort of coins*, or *medals*, on the reverse of which *the temple* might be represented. He has given us *a cut* of one of these, in which *the image* itself, with its various *rows of breasts*, is exhibited as seen through the open doors of a temple. It is possible, this *company of workmen* might take in those that wrought in all these sacred commodities, and likewise those, that made a kind of *pageants* intended for public processions, in which Diana was represented in a kind of *moveable chapel*, resembling her great temple, in a larger proportion than these supposed *models*, to which some passages of antiquity undoubtedly refer, and which the Romans called *thensæ*,

[e] *Great numbers of people, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all Asia.*] Dr. Whitby observes, this is the exact rendering of the words Εφεσου,—της Ασιας ικανον οχλον; so that, as the *paraphrase* explains it, it may refer to what Paul had done among them *at Ephesus*, which was the whole that could have fallen under the observation of Demetrius and the company.

[f] *Saying, that they are not deities, which are made with hands.*] This plainly shews, that the contrary opinion generally prevailed namely, that there was a kind of *divinity* in the *image* of their supposed deities, which, Elsner well shews, the Heathens did think; though some of them, and particularly Maximus Tyrius, and Julian, had learnt to speak of them just as the Papists now do, who indeed may seem to have *borrowed* some of their apologies from the Heathens. (See *Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 455—459.)

[g] *When*

whom all Asia, and the world worshippeth.

the whole *world worships*[g]; so that they resort hither from all parts to pay their homage to her, to the vast advantage of our whole city, and carry home with them great numbers of our shrines, to exercise their devotion at home, till they have an opportunity of coming again to worship in her temple.

28 And when they heard *these things*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

28 *And* such was the effect of what Demetrius said, that upon *hearing* [*this*] *they were* all *filled with rage; and* mad to think that both their trade and their religion were in danger, they ran about the city, aad *cried out* with great violence, *saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians*[h].

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

And this outcry of theirs gave a general alarm, so that *the whole city was filled with confusion; and* with a wild ungovernable zeal *they rushed with one accord into the theatre*, where their famous games were celebrated to the honour of that deity, *dragging thither Gaius and Aristarchus*[i], two *men of Macedonia*, [*who were*] *Paul's fellow-travellers.*

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

30 *And when Paul* heard of the distress and danger of his friends, and *would have gone in* to the theatre to address himself *to the people*, that he might either bring them to a better temper, or at least get his friends discharged by surrendering himself, *the disciples* that were with him *would not permit him* so to expose his valuable person.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

31 *And some too of* the Asiarchs, (as they were called,) that is, of *the principal officers* chosen by the community *of Asia* to preside over the public games and feasts which they were used to celebrate at certain intervals in honour of their gods, *as they* knew Paul, and *had a friendship for him, sent* out some messengers *to him*[k], *and* earnestly *desired that he would not venture*

[g] *Whom all Asia, and the world worships.*] Diana, as many critics have observed, was known under a great variety of *titles* and *characters*, as *the goddess of hunting*, of *travelling*, of *child-birth*, of *inchantments*, &c. under one or another of which views she had undoubtedly a great number of votaries.

[h] *Great is Diana*, &c.] Elsner has shewn here, how frequently this epithet of *great* was given by the Heathens to Jupiter, Diana, and other of their deities, to which he adds, that the ascription of it to *the true God* is in *scripture* called *magnifying him.* See *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 461.

[i] *Aristarchus*,] This friend and companion of Paul was afterwards *his fellow-prisoner* at Rome in the cause of the gospel; Col. iv. 10.

[k] Some *of the principal officers of Asia sent to him.*] It has from this and the following passage been concluded by many; that the people at Ephesus were then celebrating *the public games* in honour of Diana, over which these officers presided, (as Grotius, Salmasius, and Dr. Hammond have largely shewn;) and, as it is not probable that, in such a tumultuous hour, *several of them* should have *sent to him* at once with such a message, unless they had been *in the theatre together*, I cannot but declare myself of the same opinion

SECT. xliv.

Acts XIX.

venture himself into the theatre, since the rage of the people was such, that if he came it would be with the utmost hazard of his life.

32 *Some therefore*, as they stood there in the theatre, *were crying one thing, and some another*, according as their passions led them, or as the zeal of others prompted them; *for the assembly was* exceedingly *confused, and the greater part did not know for what they were come together*, having only joined the croud upon the alarm that had been given by the cry of the greatness of their goddess, without learning what had excited it.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 *And* in the midst of this confusion *they thrust forward Alexander from amongst the multitude*, that he might speak unto the people, *the Jews* also *urging him on*[l], fearing lest they, who were known to be disaffected to all kinds of idolatry, should suffer in the tumult, without being distinguished from the followers of Paul: *And Alexander* was willing to comply with the design, and therefore *beckoning with his hand* for silence,

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 *would have made a defence to the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew*, and consequently an enemy to their image worship, they would not suffer him to speak; but *one voice arose from them all*, and the whole multitude united as one man, *crying out* in a tumultuous way *for about the space of two hours* together, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

35 *But the chancellor*[m], who was a person not only

35 And when the town-

opinion, though I know that *the theatres* were places in which the Greeks often met for the dispatch of public business, when there were *no shews* exhibited. (See *Raphel. ex. Xen.* p. 177.) Some would render the word Ασιαρχαι *primates of Asia*, and I think very properly; (see *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 4. p. 302—305,) and, as they were persons of *great dignity*, and some of them *priests* too, this civil message from them was at once a proof of their candour, and of the moderation with which Paul had behaved, which made them thus kindly solicitous for his safety, Dr. Benson thinks, they recollected the danger to which Paul had been exposed in *a combat with wild beasts* in this very theatre, to which some have supposed the *apostle* refers, 1 Cor. xv. 32, a text which we may consider hereafter.

[l] *They thrust forward Alexander*, &c.] Grotius thinks, this was *Alexander the copper smith*, once a professed Christian, but afterwards *an apostate*, and an enemy to Paul; (1 Tim i. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 14;) and he supposes it *an artifice of the Jews*, who knew themselves obnoxious on account of their aversion to *idolatry*, to employ one of their body in declaring *against* Paul on this public occassion. But I question, whether the word απολογησασθαι would have been used, had he chiefly intended *an accusation against Paul*; nor is it evident to me, that he had yet *renounced Christianity*, or incurred *the sentence* referred to above, if this were indeed *the same person*, and not some other Alexander.

[m] *The chancellor.*] Our *translators* have rendered the word Γραμματευς, *the town-clerk*. It literally signifies *the scribe* or *secretary*; but, as he seems to have been a person of some *authority* as well as *learning*, I thought the word *chancellor*, which Mr. Harrington also uses, (*Works*, p. 338,) was preferable; nor would *recorder* have been much amiss. Mr. Biscoe (at *Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 4, p. 305,) endeavours

town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

SECT. xliv.

Acts XIX.

only of considerable dignity with regard to his office, but likewise of great discretion, *having pacified the people* so far as to make them tolerably silent, *said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there* in the world, that has any intelligence of 35
things at all, *that does not know that the* whole *city of the Ephesians is* with the most humble and careful regard *devoted to* the temple of *the great goddess Diana*[n], *and to* the worship of *the* miraculous [*image*] *that fell down from Jupiter;* as undisputed tradition assures us the sacred image in our temple did? *Since then these things* 36
are plainly *incontestible*, and this celestial image is no way concerned in any censure of those made with hands, *it is necessary for you to be quiet* and gentle in your proceedings, *and to do nothing in a precipitant manner*, by which you might run yourselves into vast inconveniencies and dangers before you are aware. And it 37
is particularly important to attend to it now, because indeed you have taken a very unreasonable and unwarrantable step; *for you have* violently seized and *brought these men* into the theatre, *who are neither* sacriligious *robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of your goddess*[o], which one

deavours to prove, on the testimony of Domninus and Apuleius, that the office referred, not to *the city of Ephesus*, but to *the games* and that the person who bore it represented Apollo, one of the chief of their deities, and the supposed *brother of Diana*, which, if it were indeed the case, would give great weight to *his interposition*. He appears by *this speech* a person of a considerable prudence, and great abilities; for he urges in a few words,—that there was no need of such a public declaration, that they were *votaries of Diana*, since every body knew it, ver. 35, 36.—that the persons accused were not guilty of any breach of the laws, or public offence, ver. 37, —that, if they were, this was not a legal method of prosecuting them, ver. 38, 39, —and that they were themselves liable to prosecution for such a tumultuous proceeding, ver. 40.

n *The city of the Ephesians is devoted*, &c.] Though this was the best way of rendering the word νεωκορος, which on the whole occurred to me, yet I am sensible, how far it is (even with all I have added in the *paraphrase,*) from expressing the sense and spirit of the *original*. It properly signifies *a priest*, or *priestess, devoted to some particular deity*, whose business it is to look after *the temple*, and see that it be not only kept in good repair, but also neat and clean, and beautified in a proper manner; so that by the way, the word *church-warden* among us expresses but a part of the idea.——It appears by some ancient inscriptions on *coins*, and other authentic testimonies, (see *Mr. Biscoe*, p. 306, 307; and *Raphel. ex. Xen.* p. 177, 178,) that there were some particular persons at Ephesus who had this office; but the *chancellor*, with great strength and beauty of language, to express the unanimity and zeal of *the whole city* in the service of Diana, speaks of it as *one such attendant devotee in her temple;* and, as νεωκορος is compounded of a word which signifies *to sweep*, it imports the humility with which they were ready to stoop to *the lowest office* of service there.——As for the tradition of this image's *falling down from Jupiter*, there was *the like legend* concerning several *other images* among the Heathens, (as Mr. Biscbe has shewn by many learned quotations, p. 307, 308,) as there is likewise concerning some *pictures of the virgin Mary* in Popish churches.

o *Neither robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of your goddess.*] It is very ungenerous in Orobio (*apud Limborch, Collat. cum. Jud.* p. 134,) to insinuate from hence, that *the fear of suffering* kept Paul from declaring against the established *idolatries*

SECT. XLIV.

Acts XIX.

one would imagine by these exclamations of yours that they were; but who, so far I can learn, behave themselves in a grave and orderly manner, and occasion no disturbance to the State
37 by their private notions whatever they be. *If*
38 *therefore Demetrius, and the artificers that are with him* have suffered in their property, and *have a charge* of any private injury to offer *against any one, the* civil *courts are held*, in which they may have justice done them; or if they have any crime relating to the State to alledge against any, the law directs them how they should proceed, *and there are the* Roman *proconsuls* to whom they may apply, who are the proper judges of such cases[p]: *Let them* then bring their action and *implead one another* and traverse their suit in a legal manner in either of these judicatories, till it is brought to a fair
39 determination. *But if* the cause be not properly either civil or criminal, and *you are inquiring any thing concerning other matters*, relating to our common utility, or to religion, which may seem of a special nature, there is no room to

38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another.

39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be

here; and it is much more so in Lord Shaftsbury, (*Charact.* Vol III. p 86,) to represent the *apostle* and his companions, as *acquiescing* in this defence of the *chancellor*, and sheltering themselves under it, though it maintained, that they allowed the divinity of Diana and her *image*; not to insist on Brennius's remark, that nothing said against *gods made with hands* could effect *an image*, which was supposed to have *fallen down from heaven*, nor to urge *Paul's absence*, though that puts *him* quite out of the question as to any reply to the speech; it is obvious to answer, that *the chancellor's assertion* is only this, "That the persons in question had not disturbed the public peace by any *riotous attempt* to plunder or demolish the temple or altar of Diana, nor did they abuse her by *scurrilous language*." This was much to their honour; but in how serious, strenuous, and courageous a manner *the apostles* bore an open, though always modest and peaceable, *testimony against idolatry*, the whole series of their history and writings shew, Orobio forgets, that the Jews were here *silent*; and both *he*, and the noble (but often inconsistent) writer of the *Characteristics*, forget, how *irregular a step* it would have been for any Jew or Christian to have detained an assembly, then so prudently dismissed, and how *very ill-timed* the best religious discourse would then have been, which indeed might have left the maker of it in a great measure chargeable with *all the mischief* which should have followed.

p *There are the* Roman *proconsuls.*] I cannot but agree with the learned Mr. Basnage, (*Annal.* Vol. I. p. 674,) that the province of Asia was at this time administered by Celer and Elius, who were *procurators* after the death of Silanus, (*Tacit. Annal. lib.* xii. *cap.* 1,) and having, as such officers sometimes had, the *ensigns* and ornaments of *consular dignity*, (*Sueton. Claud. cap.* 24,) might naturally enough be called *proconsuls*. This seems a more natural interpretation, than it would be to say, that *the proconsuls* of neighbouring provinces were present at these *games*, and so might be referred to here; for, not now to inquire how far their power might extend out of their proper precincts, it is obvious to remark, that this could be no argument to Demetrius, who could not prosecute his action during the games, nor command the stay of these *noble visitants* after them.—I must not forget to own my obligation to Mr. Biscoe for the clear view he has given me of the sense of *this* and the following *verse*, which I first found in him, (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 6, 7, p. 308—312,) and then, with a most remarkable similarity of interpretation, in *Mr. Harrington's Works*, p. 339.

9 *And*

be determined in a lawful assembly.

SECT. xliv.

to doubt but *it shall be determined* to the general satisfaction, *in a lawful assembly* of the Asiatic States, who will inquire into it impartially, and with a diligence proportionable to its importance. *And* to this it will be highly expedient to refer it; for *indeed*[q] *we are* all *in danger of being called in question* by our superiors *for the insurrection which has happened this day*[r], *as there is no* sufficient *cause by which we can account for this* tumultuous *concourse*[s], which therefore may justly give some alarm to the Roman magistrates.

Acts XIX. 39.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

40

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly; and without any further violence they returned to their own habitations.

41

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY God grant that *the zeal of the Heathens*, in the worship of their *imaginary deities*, may not *rise up in judgment* against us for *the neglect* of the living Jehovah! They rent the skies with *acclamations* of the *greatness of their goddess*, and spared no cost to adorn *her temple*, or to purchase *the models of it.* May a sense of the greatness of *our God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, fill our minds continually, and make us ready *to spend and be spent* in his service!

Ver. 28, 34

24

In too many instances, indeed, *religion* has degenerated into *craft*, and been made the pretence of promoting men's *secular interest.* Would to God that all artifices of this kind were to be found amongst *Heathens!* But the spirit of these *votaries* to Diana has too often invaded the *Christian church*, and perhaps raised not a few *tumults* against them who have been its best friends.—We see how mad and furious is *the rage* of an *incensed populace:* Let us bless God that we are not exposed to it, and be thankful for that *kind Providence* which preserved the precious life of the *apostle* when *after the manner of men he fought with beasts at Ephesus.* (1 Cor. xv. 32.)

25, 27

32

28, 29

30, 31

The

q *And indeed.*] Raphelius has remarked, (*Annot. ex Xen. in Act.* iv. 27; & xvi. 37,) that γαρ often signifies *indeed*, which seems to me an observation of moment.

r *In danger of being called in question for the insurrection*, &c.] There was *a Roman law*, which made it *capital* to raise a riot: "*Qui cœtum & concursum fecerit, capite puniatur;*" and it has been observed, that the *original* words, στασεως and συνρομης, remarkably answer to those of *that law.*

s *No cause by which we can account for this concourse.*] Fire, inundations, the sudden invasion of enemies, &c. might have excused and justified a sudden *concourse of people* rushing together with some violence; but the *chancellor* with great propriety observes, there was *no such cause*, nor any other adequate one, to be assigned.

a *Departed*

SECT. XLIV.

The prudence of this *chancellor* is worthy of esteem, who found out a way to *quiet this uproar:* Happy had it been for him, if the *good sense* he shewed upon this occasion had led him to see the vanity of *that idle tradition,* which taught them that *an image fell down from* their imaginary *Jupiter,* or that *those could be gods who were made with hands.* But *the god of this world hath* in all ages *blinded the minds* of multitudes, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) and they acted *like idiots* in religion, when in other instances *their sagacity* hath commanded a deserved and universal admiration. The prevalence of *idolatry* through so many polished and learned, as well as savage and ignorant nations, both ancient and modern, is *a sad demonstration* of this. Let us pray, that they may *consider and shew themselves men,* (Isa. xlvi. 8,) and *deliver their own souls* under a sensibility that they have *a lie in their right hand.* (Isa. xliv. 20.) For this *the labours of Paul* were employed; and the progress of that gospel he preached appears matter of great joy, when the effects of it are considered in this view. May it, *like the morning light,* spread from one end of the heavens to the other; while the admired *vanities of the Heathen* are degraded, and *cast* (as the sacred oracles assure us they shall be) *to the moles and the bats.* (Isa. ii. 20.)

Ver. 30, 31 35 & *seq.* 26

SECT. XLV.

Paul, having made a tour through the country of Macedonia, goes to Achaia; and returning back again through Macedonia, takes ship at Philippi, and so comes to Troas; where he held an assembly, in which the night was spent, and Eutychus, killed by a fall, was raised to life; after which Paul proceeds on his voyage. Acts XX. 1—16.

ACTS XX. 1.

SECT. XLV.

WE have given an account of the insurrection at Ephesus, how it was excited by Demetrius and his workmen, and prudently quieted by the interposition of the chancellor. *Now after the tumult was ceased, Paul calling the disciples to him, and embracing them* with great affection, *departed* from Ephesus after the long abode he had made there: And having passed through Troas in his way, he crossed the sea from thence *to go into Macedonia*[a], to visit the

Acts XX. 1.

ACTS XX. 1.

AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced *them,* and departed

[a] *Departed* from Ephesus——*to go into Macedonia.*] It is very natural to conclude, (as Dr. Benson and many others do,) that Paul now left Timothy at Ephesus, and that he refers to it, 1 Tim. i. 3, he being by this time *returned from that embassy* mentioned Acts xix. 22.—As the apostle went through Troas, which lay in his way to Macedonia,

ed for to go into Macedonia.

the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Bereans, to whom (as was observed before) he had sent Timothy and Erastus, while he stayed in Asia, (chap. xix. 22,) and from whence Timothy was now returned, and left behind him at Ephesus.

SECT. XLV.

Acts XX. 1.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

2 *And* after Paul was come to Macedonia, as he was *going through those parts* [b], he zealously pursued the work in which he was engaged; *and having exhorted* the faithful he found there, and comforted *them with much discourse, he came* from thence *into Greece*, that he might visit the churches at Corinth, and in the neighbouring cities of Achaia. *And when he had continued* [*there*] *three months* [c], he was now ready to set out from thence with what had been collected for the poor brethren in Judea; but *as* he understood that *an ambush was laid for him by the Jews, when he was about to embark for Syria, he*

3 And *there* abode three months; and when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return

upon

Macedonia, he met with a fair opportunity of preaching the gospel there; (2 Cor. ii. 12.) but, not receiving those tidings of his friends at Corinth which he expected by Titus, he passed on to Macedonia without farther delay, (*ibid.* ver. 13,) intending to proceed to Corinth from thence, since he could not visit that church *first*, as he had once intended; 2 Cor. i. 15, 16. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6.

[b] *Going through those parts.*] In Macedonia, after great anxiety in his mind, he at length met with Titus, who brought him a comfortable account of the state of affairs at Corinth; (2 Cor. vii. 5—7.) And in particular, what he said of *their liberal disposition* gave the *apostle* reason to *glory in them*, and to excite the Macedonians to imitate their generosity, in assisting the *contribution* he was now raising for the *poor Christians* in Judea, which was one great part of his business in this journey. (2 Cor. ix. 2. viii. 1—14.) The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was therefore written from Macedonia at this time, (see the places last quoted,) and was sent by Titus, who on this occasion returned to get the *collection* in still greater forwardness.——This tour through Philippi, Amphipholis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Berœa, would of course take up *several months*; and no doubt, many circumstances would occur at most of these places, which made Paul's presence with them for a while highly expedient.——It seems probable that Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy from hence, expecting to *return to Ephesus* again, and then designing that Timothy should *continue there till he came*, (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15. iv. 13.) though Providence ordered the matter otherwise. I shall hereafter, if God permit, mention the reasons which incline me at present to believe, that Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy now, rather than *after he was set at liberty from his first imprisonment* at Rome, to which time Bp. Pearson (*Annal. Paul. ad an.* 64, p. 22,) and Mr. Le Clerc, (*Eccl. Hist. cent.* i. *an.* 65, § 2,) refers it. The principal of them are well stated by Dr. Benson, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 167—199,) than which I remember nothing more satisfactory on the subject. See also *Mr. Boyse's Works*, Vol. II. p. 293, 294.

[c] *Continued there three months.*] It seems that Paul met with business here, and in other places, which detained him longer than he expected. From hence he probably wrote his celebrated Epistle to the Romans; for it plainly appears, *that epistle* was writ *before his imprisonment* at Rome, and in it he speaks of *a collection* made by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, with which he was hastening to Jerusalem, (Romans xv. 25—27.) a circumstance, which fixes it to this time. It also appears from Romans xvi. 21, that Timothy and Sosipater (or Sopater, one of the noble Bereans,) were *with him* when that *epistle* was wrote, which agrees with the *fourth verse* of *this chapter*, by which we find, they both attended him into Asia; and consequently, if the *date* of the First Epistle to Timothy be as it is fixed above, Paul found some unexpected reason to send for *that evangelist* to come to him from Ephesus, to which place (as we find from what follows,) the *apostle* did not, according to his own intention, return.

[d] *And*

SECT. XLV.

Acts XX. 3.

upon this account *thought it advisable to return by* way of *Macedonia*, so that the churches there had an happy opportunity of receiving a third visit from him.

return through Macedonia.

4 *And Sopater the Beræan* not only attended him in his Macedonian journey till he took shipping, but crossed the sea with him, and *accompanied him as far as* what is called the proper *Asia; and* there went also with him some *of the Thessalonians*, namely, *Aristarchus and Secundus; and* also *Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy*, who was now come to him from Ephesus: *And of the Asiatics*, or natives of the proconsular Asia, there were also in the number of those who joined their

4 And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus: and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus, and Trophimus.

5 company, *Tychicus and Trophimus*[d]. *These* two last mentioned having information of the time and place where they might expect us, *going before* to Asia, *stayed for us* a while *at Troas*, where we were to land.

5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

6 *And* some days after they had left us, *we set sail for Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread* were ended, *and* crossing part of the Ægean sea,

6 And we sailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came

d *And of the Asiatics, Tychicus and Trophimus.*] The several persons mentioned in *this verse* are thought by some to have been joined with Paul, as *messengers of the churches*, in carrying *their contributions* to the poor brethren at Jerusalem. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4. and 2 Cor. viii. 19—23. (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract*, p. 36, 37.) We know but few particulars of most of them, from what is said concerning them in other places.——Sopater, who in some ancient *manuscripts* is called *the Son of Pyrrhus*, is generally thought to be the same with Sosipater, whom Paul has mentioned as *his kinsman*. (Rom. xvi. 21.) Aristarchus of Thessalonica is mentioned before as a *Macedonian*; (Acts xix. 29.) he attended Paul in his voyage to Rome, (Acts xxvii. 2,) and was *his fellow-labourer*, (Philem. ver. 24,) and a *fellow-prisoner* with him. (Col. iv. 10, 11.) Secundus is not mentioned any where but here.——Gaius of Derbe, if he be not a different person of the same name, is elsewhere mentioned as *a man of Macedonia*, (Acts xix. 29,) of which, as some suppose, he was a native, but descended of a family that came from Derbe: He was *baptized* by Paul at Corinth, (1 Cor. i. 14,) and entertained him as *his host* while he abode there; (Rom. xvi. 23;) and afterwards St. John directs his Third Epistle to him.—Timothy was a native of Lystra, (Acts xvi. 1,) whom Paul particularly honoured with his friendship, and distinguished by his *two epistles* to him, as well as by joining *his name* with his own in the *title* of several other *epistles*: (2 Cor. Philip. Col. 1 and 2 Thess. Philem.) He frequently attended the apostle *in his travels*, and laboured with him *in the service of the gospel*, in which he was so diligent and zealous, that it is no wonder he was *imprisoned for it*. (Heb. xiii. 23.) Tychicus of Asia was often sent on messages by Paul, (2 Tim. iv. 12. Tit. iii. 12,) and more than once is recommended by him to the churches as *a beloved brother, and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord*, whom he employed not only to acquaint them with *his own affairs*, but for this purpose also, *that he might know their state, and comfort their hearts*. (Eph. vi. 21, 22; Col. iv. 7, 8.) Trophimus, who was of Ephesus, appears to have been *a Gentile convert*, whom we find afterwards with Paul at Jerusalem, (Acts xxi. 29,) and who attended him in other journies, till he *left him at Miletum sick*. (2 Tim. iv. 20.) These *two last* are said to be Asiatics, and, being distinguished here from Gaius and Timothy, who were of Derbe and Lystra, which lay in Asia Minor, it is plain they are so called, as being natives of the *Proconsular Asia*.——I shall add only, that it seems from the construction of the *original*, that only Tychicus and Trophimus went before to Troas, to whom I have accordingly restrained it in the *paraphrase*.

e *Came*

came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days.

sea, *came to them at Troas in five days* [e], *where we continued seven days*, conversing with the Christians there [f].

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.

And on the first day of the week, when the disciples, as it was usual with them on that day, *met together to break bread*, that is, to celebrate the eucharist in remembrance of the death of our blessed Redeemer [g], *Paul being* now to take his leave of them, and *about to depart on the morrow, preached to them* with great fervency, *and* was so carried out in his work, that he *continued his discourse until midnight. And* by the way, *there were many lamps in the upper room in which they were assembled*; for whatever the malice of their enemies might insinuate, the christians held not their assemblies in darkness, but took all prudent precautions to avoid every circumstance that might incur censure, or even suspicion. But this occasioned them to keep the

8 And there were many lights in the upper-chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a

[e] *Came to them at Troas in five days.*] Paul in his former progress came from Troas to Philippi in two days; (Acts xvi. 11, 12;) but crossing the sea is very uncertain, and it was easy for the voyage to be lengthened by contrary winds, so that we need not to explain it of the time that passed, before they joined the company that tarried for them. Paul did not set out from Philippi, till after the *Passover week*; and, if his voyage was deferred, (as some have thought,) that no offence might be given by his travelling at a season which the Jews accounted so peculiarly holy, the same reason would induce those that went before him not to begin their voyage at that time; so that Paul seems to have tarried some days after them, before he set sail: nor is there any reason to suppose with Dr. Lightfoot, *(Chron. in loc.)* that these *five days* were not spent in sailing down the river Strymon from Philippi, and crossing part of the *Ægean Sea*, but that Paul took a longer circuit, and went first to Corinth, before he came to them at Troas.

[f] *Were we continued seven days.*] This Paul might choose to do so much the rather, as he had declined *such great views of service*, as were opened to him when he passed through it before in his way to Macedonia, (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.]——Perhaps he might now *lodge* at the house of Carpus; but it seems to have been in a later journey, that he left there *the books*, and other things to which he refers, 2 Tim. iv. 13. It plainly appears from the manner in which Luke speaks here, and all along afterwards, that he *attended him* in all this journey and voyage, though, by his altering the expression, he does not seem to have been with him since he was at Philippi in his former progress; Acts xvi. 12. *& seq.* (Compare *note t* on Acts xvi. 10, p. 141.

[g] *When the disciples met together to break bread*, that is, to celebrate the eucharist.] It is strange, that Mr. Barclay, in his *Apology*, p. 475, should argue from ver. 11. that this was only *a common meal*, and not the *Lord's supper*. It is well known, the *primitive christians* administered the *eucharist*, every Lord's day; and, as that was the most solemn and appropriate, as well as the concluding act of their worship, it is no wonder that it should be mentioned as *the end of their assembling*; whereas, had nothing more than *a common meal*, been intended, Luke would have hardly thought that worth mentioning, especially when Paul being with them *on a Lord's day*, they would so naturally have something far nobler and more important in view, in which accordingly we find them employed; and it is quite unreasonable to suppose, they spent their time in *feasting*, which neither the occasion nor the hour would well admit.—The argument which some over-zealous papists have drawn from this text, for *denying the cup*, in the sacrament *to the laity*, was so solemnly given up in the *council of Trent*, *(Paolo Hist. lib.* iii. p. 486.) that it is astonishing, any who profess to believe the divine authority of *that council*, should ever have presumed to plead it again.

[h] *Sitting*

SECT. XLV.

Acts XX. 9.

the windows open to prevent the immoderate heat of the room; *and a certain young man, whose name was Eutychus*, who was there *sitting in an open window* [h], *fell into a profound sleep; and as Paul continued his discourse a long time, he was so overpowered with sleep, that he fell down from the third story* to the ground, *and was taken up dead.* This threw the whole assembly into disorder; *and Paul* upon this breaking off his discourse, *went down and fell upon him, and taking him in his arms, said, Do not make any disturbance, for* I assure you that *his life is in him* [i] and God will quickly restore him to perfect health. And having thus composed and quieted their minds, Paul returned to his work, *and going up again* into the chamber where the assembly met, *and having broken bread and eaten* with the rest of the disciples, in commemoration of the death of Christ, when this solemnity was over, *he conversed* with them *a considerable time* longer, even *till break of day* [k]; *and so* went out from that house, and *departed* from Troas, to meet the ship which was to take him aboard at Assos. *And* before the assembly broke up, *they brought the youth* into the room *alive* and well, *and were not a little comforted* at so happy an event; and the rather, as they might apprehend that some reproaches would have been occasioned by his death, if he had not been so recovered, because it happened in a christian assembly, which had been protracted so long beyond the usual bounds of time on this extraordinary occasion.

a window a certain young man, named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him*, said, Trouble not yourselves: for his life is him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

But

h *Sitting in an open window.*] The word θυρις plainly signifies *an open window*, which had a sort of *wooden casement*, or little door, which was *set open*, that the room might not be over-heated with so much company and so many lamps.—It is well known, the ancients had not yet *glass in their windows*, though the manner of making that elegant and useful commodity was invented long before.

i *His life is in him.*] Some have imagined, that, as God immediately intended to raise this young man from the dead, *the soul*, still remained in the body, though not united to it. *Cradock. Apost. Hist.* Vol. II. p 120. *not.*) But, if we conceive *of the soul* as purely an immaterial substance, I must own myself at a loss to guess what such kind of expressions mean. It is well known, that ψυχη often signifies *life*; and the words only import, that, though he was *dead before*, the apostle now perceived some symptoms of *his revival.*—I only add, that επεπεσεν, *he fell upon him*, may signify that Paul threw himself on the body, as Elijah and Elisha did on those they intended to raise, (1 Kings xvii. 21. 2 Kings iv. 34.) and that συμπεριλαβων may either signify *his embracing him* at the same time, or *his lifting him up in his arms* with the assistance of some that stood near.

k *Conversed till break of day.*] A remarkable instance of zeal in Paul, when in a journey, and when he had been so long employed in public exercises; perhaps under an apprehension, like that which he expressed soon after to *the elders* of Ephesus, ver. 25. that he should never have an opportunity of seeing these his friends together any more.

1 *Endeavoured*

SECT. XIV.

Acts XX. 13.

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

But we that were to go with Paul *went before into the ship, and sailed* round the neighbouring promontory *to Assos, where we were to take up Paul; for so he had appointed, choosing himself to go afoot* from Troas thither, that he might thus enjoy a little more of the company of his christian brethren, of whom he was then to take a long leave. *And as soon as he joined us at* 14 *Assos*, according to his own appointment, *we took him up* into the ship, *and came to* the celebrated port of *Mitylene* in the island of Lesbos. *And sailing from thence we came the next day* 15 *over against Chios*, the island so famous for producing some of the finest Grecian wines; *and the day following we touched at* the island of *Samos: and* steering from thence towards the Asian shore, *having stayed* a while *at Trogyllium we* put into the mouth of the river Mæander, and *came the day after to Miletus. For Paul* 16 under whose direction the vessel was, *had determined to sail by Ephesus*, which lay on the other side of the bay, without calling there; and much less would he go up the river to Colosæ, or Laodicea, *that he might not* be obliged to *spend any* considerable *time in Asia; for he earnestly endeavoured, if it were possible for him* to do it, *to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost*[1]. Nevertheless, he sent for the ministers of Ephesus, and made a very remarkable discourse to them, of which we shall give a particular account in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what pleasure would Paul, and the christians of Macedonia and Achaia, enjoy these happy *interviews* with each other! A blessed earnest no doubt it was, of that *superior pleasure* with which they shall meet *in the day of the Lord*, when (as he had testified Ver. 1, 2

1 *Endeavoured to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.*] It is observed by Chrysostom, as was hinted on a former occasion of this kind, *note* c on (Acts xviii. 21, p. 182,) this was, that he might have an opportunity of meeting a greater number of people from Judea and other parts, the days being then longer than at any other feast.—In consequence of this, some journies might perhaps be saved, and many prejudices against his person and ministry obviated; and, which was particularly considerable, the readiest and best opportunity taken of distributing to those Jewish christians, that lived perhaps at some distance from Jerusalem, the alms with which he was charged. Yet, by a mysterious providence, this very circumstance of *meeting so many strangers* at the feast was the occasion of *his imprisonment*. See Acts xxi. 27, *& seq.*

SECT. XLV.

testified to some of them) they shall appear as *his joy and his crown*, (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.)

Ver. 7—9 We may assure ourselves, that his converse with his friends at Troas was peculiarly delightful; and may reasonably hope, that though *one of the auditory* was *overcome* by the infirmity of nature, and cast into *a deep sleep* during *so long a discourse* as Paul made, yet that *many others* were all wakeful, and gave a joyful *attention*. Nor can the apostle be censured for imprudence, in *protracting the divine exercise* in such an extraordinary circumstance, beyond the limits which would commonly be convenient.

9—12 Eutychus was unhappily overtaken, and he had like to have paid dear for it: *His death* would, no doubt, have been *peculiarly grievous* to his pious friends, not only as *sudden* and *accidental*, but as the *sad effect* of having slept under the *word of God*, under the *preaching of an apostle*. Yet even in that view of it, how much more *inexcusable* had he been, had it been in the *broad light of the day*, in a *congregation* where the service would hardly have

9 filled up *two hours?* Where yet we sometimes see *christian worshippers*, (if they may be called worshippers) *slumbering and sleeping;* a sight, I believe, never to be seen in a *Mahometan mosque*, and seldom in *a pagan temple*. Had those near Eutychus, that had observed his slumber, out of a foolish complaisance *forborn to awake him*, they would have brought perhaps *greater guilt* upon their own souls than he upon his; and when *his eyes* and *ears* had been sealed in death, might perhaps have *reflected upon themselves* with a painful severity as having been *accessary to his ruin*. But the *mercy of the Lord* joined with and added efficacy to *the compassion of Paul*, his servant; in consequence of which the life of this youth, *was restored*, and he was delivered well to his friends: Whereas, *many* that have allowed themselves to *trifle under sermons*, and *set themselves to sleep*, or who, as it were, have been *dreaming awake*, have *perished for ever* with the neglected sound of the gospel in their ears, have *slept the sleep* of eternal *death*, and are *fallen to rise no more*.

16 We see Paul solicitous to be present at Jerusalem at Pentecost, declining a visit to his Ephesian friends, amongst whom he had lately made so long an abode; thereby, no doubt, *denying himself* a most pleasing entertainment, out of regard to the views of *superior usefulness:* Thus must we learn to act; and if we would be of any importance in life, and pass our final account honourably and comfortably, must *project schemes of usefulness*, and resolutely adhere to them, though it obliges us to abstract or restrain ourselves from the *converse of many* in whose company we might find some of the most agreeable entertainments we are to expect on our way to heaven. Happy shall we be, if, at length

meeting

meeting them at the end of our journey, we enjoy an everlasting pleasure *in that converse*, which fidelity to our common master has now obliged us to interrupt.

SECT. XLVI.

Paul's pathetic and important discourse to the elders of the Ephesian church, when he took his leave of them at Miletus. Acts XX. 17, *to the end.*

Acts XX. 17.

AND from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Acts XX. 17.

IT was observed in the preceding section, that Paul's concern to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost prevented his going to Ephesus to visit his Christian friends there; *but* as he was not far from thence, and was desirous to see them, he took this opportunity of *sending* a message *to Ephesus from* the neighbouring city of *Miletus*, while the ship in which *he* was embarked lay at anchor there, and *called thither the elders of the* Ephesian *church*[a].

SECT. XLVI. Acts XX. 17.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

And when they were come to him, he made a very affectionate discourse, and *said to them, You* well *know*, my bear brethren, *how I have been conversant among you*, and in what manner I have behaved, *all the time* which has elapsed *from the first day in which I entered into Asia*[b]; 18

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears,

Not only instructing others in the principles of divine truth, but in the whole tenor of my conduct *serving the Lord* Jesus Christ myself, *with* 19

a *Called thither the elders of the church.*] It is so plain, that these *elders* are in the 28th verse called *bishops*, that the most candid writers of our own establishment allow the distinction between *bishops* and *presbyters* not to have been of so early a date. (Compare Phil. i. 1; Tit. i. 5, 7; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, which are equally strong to the same purpose) Dr. Hammond would indeed evade the argument by saying, that he called together *all the diocesan bishops* of all the neighbouring parts of Asia. But it is certain, the congregations of Asia, Galatia, Macedonia, &c. are spoken of in Paul's writings as *distinct churches*; and it is difficult to conceive, how *such a number of diocesans* could have been *called together* on so short a warning, without supposing them less conscientious in point of *residence*, than one would have suspected such *primitive ministers* should have been; nor can we imagine, that Paul would have connived at so gross an irregularity, and so dangerous a precedent, had he found it out among them.

b *How I have been conversant among you all the time.* &c.] This can only mean, that, during the whole time of his stay among them, he had behaved himself in the manner afterwards described; and consequently, there can be no room to infer from hence, as Dr. Hammond does, that *all the Asian bishops* were present. As by far the greatest part of the time had been spent at Ephesus, and the *ministers there* could not but know how he had acted and conversed in the near neighbourhood, it is evident he might use this expression *to them alone* with great propriety.

c *Testifying*

SECT. XLVI.

Acts XX. 19.

with all humility and lowliness of mind, *and with many tears* of tender affection, *and* in the midst of many *trials which befell me*, especially *by* means of *the ambushes* which the malice *of the Jews* was continually laying for me; by which they endeavoured as much as possible to destroy both my person and my reputation, and to frustrate all the success of my labours. Nevertheless you know that nothing discouraged me from endeavouring to discharge my duty, [*and*] can witness for me *how I have suppressed nothing that was advantageous*, or which could be of any service to your edification; *not* [*neglecting*] *to preach to you, and to teach you publicly* in worshipping assemblies, *and*, as God gave me opportunity, *from house to house*; inculcating in visits, and in private meetings, the same great doctrines which I declared in the synagogues, and other places of concourse and resort;

tears, and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 20 *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 *Testifying* and urging with the greatest earnestness and affection[c], *both to the Jews and Greeks*, the great importance and absolute necessity of *repentance towards God, and* of a cordial and living *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, in order to their eternal salvation.

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 *And now, behold I am going bound*, as it were, *in the Spirit*, under the strong impulse of the Spirit of God upon my mind, which intimates my duty to me in such a manner, that I can neither omit nor delay it; and am firmly resolved to proceed *to Jerusalem*; *not* particularly *knowing* what I shall suffer in that city, or what *the things* may be *that shall befall me in it*, when

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befal me there:

23 I come thither: *Excepting that the Holy Spirit testifies, in* almost *every city* through which I pass, *saying*, by the mouth of the divinely inspired prophets, whom I find among the Christians there, *that bonds and afflictions await me.*

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city; saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 *But I make no account of any of these things, nor do I esteem my* very *life precious to myself* on such an occasion[d]; *so that I may* but faithfully

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life

[c] *Testifying* and urging, &c.] The word διαμαρτυρομαι sometimes signifies *to prove a thing by testimony*, (Acts ii. 40; viii. 25,) and sometimes from a conviction of its truth and importance *to urge it with great earnestness*. (1 Tim. v. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 14.) It is plain, that we are to take it *in the latter sense* in this place; but *both* are included, ver. 24.

[d] *Nor do I esteem my life precious to myself.*] It adds great beauty to this, and all the other passages of *scripture*, in which the *apostles* express *their contempt of the world*, that they were not uttered by persons, like Seneca and Antoninus, in the full affluence of its enjoyments, but by men under the pressure of the greatest calamities, who were every day *exposing their lives* for the sake of God, and in the expectation of an happy immortality.

e *I*

life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

fully and *joyfully finish my course* as a Christian and an apostle *and* fulfil *the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus*, [*even*] *to testify* the truth, and urge the importance, of *the* glorious *gospel of the* free and abundant *grace of God*, to which I am myself so highly obliged, beyond all expression, and beyond all the returns that I can ever make, by any labour or suffering I may undergo for his service. SECT. XLVI. Acts XX. 24

25 And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

And now. behold, I know that ye all, my dear brethren, *among whom I have* so long *conversed, preaching the kingdom of God*[c], *shall not see my face any more*[f]; for if I should ever return to these parts of the world again, it is particularly intimated to me, that I shall no more come to Ephesus. 25

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

Wherefore I sent for you, that I may take my solemn leave of you, and *I testify to you* all *this day, that* if any of you, or of the people under your care, perish, I at least *am clear from the blood of all men.* 26

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

For God is my witness, that *I have* sincerely laboured for the salvation of all that heard me, and have *not declined to declare to you* with the utmost freedom and integrity *all the counsel of God*[g]: but on the contrary have laid before you the whole system of divine truths relating to our redemption by Christ, and the way to eternal happiness with him, in the most plain and faithful manner, whatever censure, contempt, or opposition, I might incur by such a declaration. 27

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and

Therefore, my brethren as you desire to live and die with comfort, and to give up your final account 28

[c] *I know, that ye all among whom I have conversed*, &c.] The late learned, moderate, and pious Dr. Edmund Calamy observes, that, if the *apostles* had been used (as some assert,) to *ordain diocesan bishops* in their last visitation, this had been a proper time to do it; or that, if Timothy had been already ordained *bishop of Ephesus*, Paul, instead of calling them all *bishops*, would surely have given some hint to inforce *Timothy's authority* among them, especially considering what is added, ver. 29, 30. (See *Dr. Calamy's Defence*, Vol. I. p. 78, *& seq.*) Ignatius would have talked in a very different stile and manner on this head.

[f] *Shall not see my face any more*,] I cannot think, either that the force of the expression ουκετι οψεσθε——υμεις παντες is sufficiently expressed by saying, *Ye shall not ALL see my face any more*, or that such an intimation, which might possibly concern only one or two, should have occasioned such a general lamentation as is expressed, ver. 38, and therefore I conclude, that the *apostle* had received some particular revelation, that, if he should ever return to these parts of Asia again, (as from Philem. ver. 22, I think it probable he might,) yet that he should not have an opportunity of calling at Ephesus, or of seeing the *ministers* to whom he now addressed.

[g] *Not declined to declare to you* with the utmost freedom and integrity.] My learned and ingenious friend, the reverend Mr. Brekell (in his *Christian Warfare*, p. 33, *Not*,) has proved by some very apposite quotations from Demosthenes and Lucian, that the proper import of the word υποστελλω, in such a connection, is *to disguise* any important truth, or at least *to decline* the open publication of it, for fear of displeasing those to whom it ought to be declared.

[h] *Take*

SECT. XLVI.

Acts XX.

account well in that day which I have so often mentioned to you, I solemnly charge you that you *take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock* [h] *over which the Holy Spirit has constituted* and appointed *you* inspectors or *bishops* [i]: See then that you act worthy of that important charge, and be careful diligently *to feed the church of God, which he hath redeemed with his own* precious *blood* [k], graciously becoming incarnate for its salvation, and submitting to the severest sufferings and death, in that human nature which for this purpose he united to the divine.

28 and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 Wonder not that I give you this charge in so strict a manner; *for*, besides the weighty reasons for it which I hinted above, *I know this, that after my departure* from the churches in these parts notwithstanding all I have already done to preserve discipline and truth among you, (1 Tim. i. 20,) seducing teachers, like so many *grievous* and mischievous *wolves* [l], *will enter*

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

h *Take heed——to the whole flock.*] A proper concern for the safety and prosperity of *the flock* would no doubt lead them to guard against *the admission of such persons* into the *ministry*, as were like to *hurt the church*, and to do that they could towards *forming others* to that important office, and *admitting them* into it with due solemnity. But, as *the Ephesian church* was for the present *supplied with ministers*, it was not so immediate a care as *their preaching*, and therefore did not require such express mention.

i *Over which the Holy Spirit has constituted you bishops.*] As it was *by the operation of the Holy Spirit* that they were *qualified* for this high office of the *Christian ministry*, so there was reason to believe, that the *apostles* and *elders*, who might concur in *setting them apart* to it, and the several *members* of the *Ephesian church*, *who chose* them to such a relation to that society, were *under the guidance* and direction of that sacred agent: and the expression shews, as good Mr. Baxter well observes. (*Works*, Vol. II. p. 284,) how absurd it is for any *to reject the ministry* in general, under a pretence that they have *the Holy Ghost* to teach them.

k *The church of God, which he hath redeemed with his own blood.*] How very little reason there is to follow *the few copies*, which read Κυριου instead of Θεου, the reverend Messrs. Enty and Lavington have so fully shewn, in their dispute with Mr, Joseph Hallet on this text, that I think this passage must be allowed as an incontestable proof, that *the blood of Christ* is here called *the blood of God*, as being *the blood of that man*, who is also *God with us, God manifest in the flesh*; and I cannot but apprehend, that it was by the special direction of *the Holy spirit*, that so remarkable an expression was used.——Raphelius has shewn, that περιποιειν often signifies *to preserve from destruction*. (*Not ex Herod.* p. 583.)

l *Grievous wolves.*] Some, thinking that the word βαρεις properly signifies *their strength*, would render it *oppressive*; but I see no reason for departing from our *English Version*. Their eager and over-bearing temper made them no doubt *grievous* to the Christian church, though destitute of secular power. The *apostle* evidently makes *a distinction* between *the wolves* who were to break in upon them from without, and *the perverse teachers that were to arise from among themselves*. I interpret both of *seducers*, who called themselves *Christians*, (as *false prophets* are called by Christ *wolves in sheep's cloathing*, Matt. vii. 15,) for Paul would not have spoken of *Heathen persecutors*, as to *arise after his departure*, considering what extremities from persons of that kind he had himself suffered in Asia. (2 Cor. i. 8—10.) It seems probable therefore, that by *the grievous wolves* he means *Judaizing false apostles*, who, though they had before this time done a great deal of mischief at Corinth, and elsewhere, had not yet got any footing at Ephesus; and by *the perverse men arising from among themselves*, he may mean such as Phygellus and Hermogenes, and some others, who revived the exploded and condemned doctrines of Hymenæus

enter in among you, who with unwarrantable and pernicious views, *having no mercy on the flock*, will fall upon it with a voracious eagerness and overbearing violence, and make a terrible havock, out of a mean and wicked regard to their own private and secular interest: *Yea*, which is yet more lamentable, even from *among your ownselves* proud and factious *men shall arise, speaking perverse things*, contrary to sound doctrine, in order *to draw away disciples* from the purity and simplicity of the Christian faith, as I delivered it to you, that they may follow *after them*, till they are destroyed with them. *Watch therefore* with all diligence and care, *remembering that for the space of three years*, during which I abode at Ephesus, or in the neighbouring parts[m], *I ceased not to warn every one* to whom I had access. *by night and by day*[n], *with tears* in mine eyes, which manifested the tenderness and sincerity of my concern for their happiness. Let it then be your care, that a church planted by me with so much labour and solicitude of soul, may not be ravaged and overthrown by the enemy, but that it may long continue to flourish.

30 Also of your ownselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

And now, brethren, as the providence of God is calling me away, and appointing me other scenes of labour or suffering, *I* most heartily and affectionately *recommend you to God, and to the word of his grace*, to his gospel and blessing, to his presence and spirit; [*even*] *to him that is able to edify* and build *you* up in your holy faith[o], *and*

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

meneus and Alexander; (compare 2 Tim. i. 15; ii. 17, 18, with 1 Tim. i. 20,) as also *those* that afterwards introduced the Nicolaitan principles and practices, of which Christ complains as prevailing here, (Rev. ii. 6,) as well as in the neighbouring city of Pergamus. (*Ibid.* ver. 14, 15.) So that the argument which some have urged from hence, to prove that the *First Epistle* to Timothy was writ *after this meeting*, is quite inconclusive.

m *For the space of three years.*] Mr. L'Enfant and some other *critics* conclude, that *these years* are to be reckoned *from his first arrival* at Ephesus, chap. xviii. 19. But it is so plain, that he made *no stay* then, and that it was a considerable time before he returned thither, (compare chap. xix. 1,) that it seems to me much more probable, that though, after his preaching *three months in the synagogue* he taught only *two years in the school of Tyrannus* (chap. xix. 8—10,) he spent *three years* in or about this city. (Compare *note* c on Acts xix. 8, p. 188, and *note* c on Acts xix. 10, *ibid.*)

n *By night and by day.*] This may probably intimate, that sometimes they had *their night-meetings*, either about the time of *the tumult*, to avoid offence, or because many of the Christians, being *poor*, were obliged, as Paul himself was, to spend a considerable part of *the day* in secular labours. Compare ver. 34.

o *Even to him that is able*, &c.] Though *the gospel* may be said *to be able to edify men*, as *the scriptures* are undoubtedly said *to be able to make them wise unto salvation*, (2 Tim. iii. 15,) yet it seems something harsh to say, that *doctrines* or *writings* can *give us an inheritance*. Some have explained τω λογω, *the word*, as signifying *Christ*, to whom it is evident these operations may be ascribed; (compare Mat. xvi. 18; Col. iii. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 8,) but as I do not remember that Christ is ever called *the*

SECT. xlvi.

Acts XX. 33

and to give you at length *an inheritance* of eternal life and glory, *among all that are sanctified* by divine grace, and so prepared for it.

33 As for me, it is a great pleasure to reflect upon it, that I have a testimony in my own conscience, and in yours, that I have not directed my ministry to any mercenary views of pleasing any, how distinguished soever their circumstances might be, nor sought by any methods to enrich myself among you: *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or* costly *raiment*, but have contented myself with a plain and laborious

34 life: *Yea, yourselves know, that* far from having any secular or worldly designs in preaching the gospel, *these hands*, which I am now stretching out among you, *have ministered* by their labour *to my* own *necessities, and* even have assisted *to* support *those that were with me.*

35 (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.) In which, as well as in other respects, *I have* set you an example, and by the conduct I have observed among you, as well as by the doctrine that I taught you, have *shewed you all things* that relate to your duty, *how that thus labouring* as I have done, *you ought to assist the* needy and *infirm*, who are not able to maintain themselves[p]; *and* should be careful *to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself*, while he conversed with his disciples. *said*, "*It is much happier to give than to receive*[q]." See to it therefore, in that ministerial character which you bear, that you, above all others, be an example to the flock, of a generous and compassionate temper; and instead of making yourselves burthensome, be as helpful to them as you possibly can, both in their temporal and spiritual interest. *And*

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

the word of God's grace, I rather suppose, that τῳ ἐνιαυτῳ refers to Θεῳ, since *God* was evidently *the last person* mentioned before, and as it is certain that, whatever *the word* does, God does by it, this must be acknowledged to be *the sense*, whether the construction be, or be not, admitted. Compare Rom. xvi. 25, 27; and Jude, ver. 24, 25.

p *To assist the infirm.*] The word ασθενουντων has exactly *this signification*, and, as Raphelius shews at large, (*Not. ex Herod.* p. 384, & *seq.*) may express either *sickness or poverty*, as the Hebrew word חלה also does. (See my *Sermon* on *compassion to the sick*, p. 6, 7.) It must here signify, to be sure, such *poor people*, as are *disabled* some way or another from maintaining themselves by their own labour, Compare Eph. iv. 28.

q *Remember the words of the Lord Jesus*, &c.] This is a true and precious monument of *Apostolical tradition*, which, by being written in these authentic memoirs, is happily preserved, Dr. Tillotson, (Vol. III. p. 387,) Monsieur Ablancourt (*Apoph. Anc.* p. 3,(Grotius, and some other writers, have quoted passages from Plutarch, Seneca, and others of the *ancients*, bearing some resemblance to it.

r *That*

SECT. XLVI.

Acts XX. 36

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him.

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship,

And having said these things, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all in the most fervent and affectionate manner, and with the tenderest expressions of the most cordial friendship took his leave of them. *And there was a great lamentation* on this occasion *among all* those that were present; *and falling upon Paul's neck, they* embraced and *kissed him* with great affection, and with many tears; *Especially grieving for that* melancholy *word which he spake*, and which immediately had struck their very hearts, when he told them, *that they should see his face no more* in those parts[r], where they had so long enjoyed the benefit of his ministry, inspection, and converse. *And* thus *they conducted him to the ship*, commending his person to the protection, and his labours to the blessing of his great master.

IMPROVEMENT

THOUGH these *elders of Ephesus* were *to see the face of the apostle no more*, which was indeed just matter of *lamentation*, yet we would hope this excellent *discourse of his* continued in their minds, and was *as a nail fastened in a sure place.* May *all Christians*, and especially *all Ministers*, that read it, retain a lively *remembrance of* it. Ver. 25--38

May we learn of this great apostle, *to serve the Lord with humility* and affection: May those who are called to *preside in assemblies*, and to take the charge of souls, *with-hold* from their people *nothing that is profitable for them*; and, not contenting themselves with *public instructions*, may they also *teach from house to house*, shewing the same temper in private converse which they express while ministering in the assemblies; and *testifying*, as matter of universal and perpetual importance, *repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*: And, O that the divine blessing may attend these remonstrances, that *many* may every where *repent* and *believe*! 19 20 22

May *all ministers* learn the exalted sentiments and language of this truly *Christian hero*; and each of them be able to say, under the

[r] *That they should see his face no more.*] As this, which is, St. Luke's own explication, leaves no room for the ambiguity, which might be imagined in the expression used in ver. 25, it seems to me most evidently to prove, that the *First Epistle* to Timothy could not, as Bishop Pearson so earnestly contends, *Op. Posth. Diss.* 1 cap. ix. § 5,) be written after this, and so late as the year 65; and consequently it appears to overthrow all that he or others have built on that supposition, and greatly to confirm the argument suggested above in *note* [e].

SECT. XLVI.

the greatest difficulties and discouragements, in the view of *bonds and afflictions*, and even of *martyrdom* itself, *None of these things*
XX. *move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish*
23,24 *my course with joy, and* may fulfil *the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

28 Such resolutions may they form when they enter on their office, and may they act upon them in discharging every part of it: *taking heed to themselves, and to the* respective *flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers:* Accordingly may they *take the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly: not for fil-*
33 *thy lucre, but of a ready mind;* (1 Pet. v. 2;) *coveting no man's silver or gold, or raiment;* nor affecting to *enrich* or *aggrandize* themselves or their families, but always ready to *relieve the neces-*
34,35 *sitous* according to their ability, *remembering this* precious *word of the Lord Jesus*, so happily preserved, especially in this connection, *that it is more blessed to give than to receive.* Thus while
27 they are *not shunning to declare* in the course of their public ministry *the whole counsel of God*, may they also be *examples to the flock* of an uniform, steady, and resolute piety! And to quicken
28 them to it, may they often reflect, that *the church of God committed to their trust* was *redeemed by his own blood!* May it be impressed deeply on all our hearts, that we are entrusted with the care of *those precious souls* for whom *our divine Redeemer* bled and died! May we therefore see to it, that we are *watchful* to preserve them
31 from *every danger*; that we *warn them day and night with tears;* and, in a word, that we *order our whole behaviour* so, that when we must take our final leave of them, we may be able to testify as in the sight of God, *that we are clear from the blood of all men.*

26,32 Such *ministers* may God raise up to his church in every future age; *such* may his grace make all that are already employed in the work; and for this purpose let every one who wishes well to the common cause of Christ and of souls join in *recommending us to God, and to the word of his grace*, whence we are to draw our instructions and our supports: This will be a means, under the divine blessing, *to keep us from falling*, in the midst of all dangers and temptations; till at length *he give us an inheritance with all the saints* among whom we have laboured, that *they who sow, and reap, may rejoice together.* Amen.

SECT-

SECT. XLVII.

The apostle proceeds in his voyage from Miletus to Cæsarea, and resolutely pursues his journey to Jerusalem, notwithstanding repeated warnings from inspired persons of the danger he must encounter there. Acts XXI. 1—16.

Acts XXI. 1.

AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara.

Acts XXI. 1.

IT was with difficulty Paul and his company had parted from the elders of the church of Ephesus; but after the instructions he had given them, he was determined to pursue his voyage; *And as soon as we had withdrawn* ourselves *from them, and had set sail* from Miletus, *we came with a direct course to* the island of *Coos; and the next day to* that of *Rhodes, and from thence to* the port of *Patara*, a city which lay on the continent, in the territory of Lycia. *And finding* there *a ship* that was *passing over to Phœnicia*, quitting the vessel which had brought us hither, *we went aboard* this other, *and set sail.* *And coming within sight of Cyprus*, we pursued our voyage without touching there; *and leaving it on the left hand, we sailed* by the southern coast of that island *to Syria, and landed at* the celebrated city of *Tyre*, the principal port of Phœnicia, *for there the ship was to unload its freight.* *And we continued there* at Tyre *seven days, finding* a number of persons in that city who were *disciples* of our common Lord; among whom there were some *who told Paul by* the inspiration of *the Spirit*, if he tendered his own liberty and safety, *not to go up to Jerusalem*[a], since it would certainly expose him to great hazard, and very threatening dangers would await him there.

But when we had finished these seven days, we departed from thence, *and went our way* with a full resolution of embarking again to proceed to Jerusalem, notwithstanding all these admonitions; as Paul deliberately judged, that all the sufferings he might meet with in the course of his ministry would tend to the furtherance of the gospel, and that it was his duty to fulfil his engagements

SECT. XLVII. Acts XXI. 1.

2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burthen.

4 And finding disciples we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days,

a If he tendered his own liberty and safety, *not to go up*, &c.] It is necessary to take it with this limitation; for, had *the Spirit* forbidden his journey to Jerusalem, we may be sure he would have desisted from it.]

b *Ptolemais.*]

SECT. xlvii.

Acts XXI. 5.

engagements to the churches, in delivering their alms to the brethren there, whatever might happen: *And* though he did not yield to the persuasion of his friends at Tyre, yet *they* omitted no imaginable token of respect, but *all attended us out of the city, with* [*their*] *wives and children; and kneeling down on the sea shore* where we were to part, *we* once more *prayed* together, and so took our leave. 6 *And having* affectionately *embraced each other, we* that were going to Jerusalem with Paul *went on board the ship* to proceed on our voyage, *and they* that dwelt at Tyre *returned back to their own houses.* 7 *And finishing our course* by sea, *we came from Tyre to* the port of *Ptolemais*[b], which lay to the south of the former city, on the same coast of the Mediterranean sea; *and embracing the brethren* there, *we continued with them* no more than *one day.* 8 *And on the morrow, Paul and his company departed* from Ptolemais, *and* travelling by land *came to* the city of *Cæsarea*[c]; which had been rendered remarkable in the church by the residence of Cornelius the devout centurion, and was celebrated over the whole country, not only for the elegance and splendor of its buildings, but likewise as the place where the Roman governor generally resided and kept his court. *And entering* there *into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was* [*one*] *of the seven* deacons mentioned in the former part of this history, (chap. vi. 5.) and who had settled at Cæsarea, after he had baptized the eunuch, (chap. viii. 40,) *we lodged with him* during our stay in this city. 9 *Now he had four virgin daughters, who were* all *prophetesses,* as the miraculous gifts of the

days, we departed, and went our way, and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, (which was *one* of the seven,) and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins,

b *Ptolemais.*] This was a celebrated city on the sea coast, which fell by lot to the tribe of Asher, who did not drive out the inhabitants. Its ancient name was *Accho.* (Judg. i. 31.) It was enlarged and beautified by the *first* of the Egyptian Ptolemies, from whence it took its new appellation. It was the scene of many celebrated actions in that series of mad expeditions, which was called *the holy war.* The Turks, who are now masters of all this region, call it *Acca,* or *Acra*; and, notwithstanding all the advantages of its situation, on one of the finest *bays* on that coast, and in the neighbourhood of mount Carmel, it is now, like many other noble ancient cities, only a heap of ruins. See *Mr. Maundrell's Journey to Jerusalem,* p. 53.

c *Cæsarea.*] To what I have said in the *paraphrase* concerning this city I shall only add, that it lay in the tract of land which fell to the tribe of Manasseh; that it had once been called *Straton's Tower,* but took its name of *Cæsarea* from a noble temple, which *Herod the Great* dedicated to Augustus Cæsar, when he rebuilt it almost entirely of marble, so that Josephus, who was well acquainted with it, tells us it was the finest city of Judea. See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xv. *cap.* 9, [al. 13,] § 6, & *Bell. Jud. lib.* iii. *cap.* 9, [al. 14,] § 1.

virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

the Spirit were sometimes communicated to women as well as to men. (Compare Acts ii. 17, 18.) *And as we continued* [*there*] *many days,* *a certain prophet whose name was Agabus,* who had been acquainted with us some years before at Antioch, where he foretold the famine which had since happened in the days of Claudius Cæsar, (chap. xi. 28,) *came down from Judea* to Cæsarea. *And coming to us,* when we had several of our friends together, he uttered a prediction which greatly affected us all, attending it, as usual, with a significant and prophetic sign; for *he took up Paul's girdle, and binding his own hands and feet, he said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit,* by whose inspiration I now speak and act, *So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man whose girdle this is, and shall deliver him* a prisoner *into the hands of the Gentiles.*

SECT. xlvii. Acts XXI. 10. 11

And when we who were present *heard these things,* solicitous for the life and safety of so dear a friend, and so eminent a servant of Christ in the gospel, *both we* his companions who came to Cæsarea with him, *and* also *the inhabitants of that place, intreated him* with tears, in the most pressing and endearing terms, *that he would not go up to Jerusalem,* since it appeared that he would be exposed to such imminent dangers in consequence of that journey. 12

But Paul, sensibly touched with the concern which we expressed on his account, and yet resolutely bent upon following what he apprehended to be the evident call of duty, whatever sufferings it might expose him to, *answered* at once with the greatest tenderness and firmness of spirit, *What mean ye,* my dear friends, by *weeping* thus, *and* even *breaking my heart* by these fond solicitations? Cease your tears, and your importunity, in an affair where conscience pleads on the opposite side: *for* I can assure you, as I told my brethren of Ephesus in my last interview with them, (chap. xx. 24,) that *I am ready* with the greatest cheerfulness, *not only to be bound* and cast into prison, *but also to die at Jerusalem,* or wherever else I may be called to it, *for the* honourable and beloved *name of the Lord Jesus,* and shall esteem it a most glorious and happy period of life, to pour out my blood in defence of that blessed gospel which he hath committed to my charge. 13

And

SECT. xlvii.

Acts. XXI. 14.

And when we plainly perceived, that *he would not be persuaded* by any importunity we could use, *we ceased* to press him any farther, *saying*, *Let the will of the Lord be done!* May he protect his faithful servant, whithersoever he leads him, and over-rule his confinement and affliction to the advantage of that glorious cause, on which it seems on the first appearance to wear so threatening an aspect.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 *And after these days* had been spent at Cæsarea, Paul would not lose the opportunity of being present at the approaching festival, and therefore *making up our baggage we went up to* 16 *Jerusalem* as expeditiously as we could. *And [some] of the disciples also from Cæsarea went along with us, and brought [us] to* the house of *one Mnason a Cyprian, an old disciple*[d], *with whom we should lodge*; which we were the more willing to do, as he was a person of established character and reputation in the church.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went also with us *certain* of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple with whom we should lodge.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 11, 13 LET us observe and emulate that excellent and heroic temper which appeared in the blessed apostle St. Paul, in this journey to Jerusalem: When still *the Holy Spirit testified in every city, that bonds and afflictions awaited him*; when *his friends* in so fond a manner hung around him, and endeavoured to *divert him from his purpose*; he was not *insensible* to their tender regards: Far from that, *his heart* melted, and was even *ready to break*, under the impression; yet still he continued *inflexible*: There was a sacred passion warmer in his soul than the love of friends, or liberty, or life; *the love of Christ constrained him*, (2 Cor. v. 14.) and made him *willing*, joyfully willing, *not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem, for* his *name*, who had indeed *died for him* there. O that such as this might be the temper, such as these the sentiments, of every *minister*, of every *Christian!* For surely *imprisonment* in such a case is better than liberty; and *death* infinitely preferable to the most prosperous life secured by deserting his service, or flying from any post which *the great Captain of our salvation* hath assigned us.

On

d *Brought us to one Mnason a Cyprian, an old disciple.*] Mnason was a native of Cyprus, but an inhabitant of Jerusalem, who probably had been converted either by Christ, or the *apostle*, at the first opening of the gospel there.——I have followed Sir Norton Knatchbull's version of the words, as that which appeared to me best to suit the *original*; for it seems very unnatural to render ἀγοντες Μνασωνι, *bringing Mnason with them.*

On the other hand, let us learn of these wise and pious *friends of Paul*, to *acquiesce in the will of God*, when the determination of it is apparent, how contrary soever it may be to our natural desires, or even to those views which we had formed for the advancement of his cause and interest in the world; where *perfect resignation* may be *difficult*, in proportion to the degree of our piety and zeal. *Can any teach him knowledge*, (Job xxi. 22,) or pursue the purposes of his glory by wiser and surer methods than those which he has chosen? In this instance *the bonds of Paul*, which these good men dreaded as so fatal an obstruction to the gospel, *tended*, as he himself saw and witnessed while he was yet under them, *to the furtherance of it*; (Phil. i. 12.) and what they apprehended would prevent their seeing him any more, occasioned his returning to Cæsarea, and continuing there for a long time, when, though he was *a prisoner*, they had free liberty of conversing with him, (Acts xxiii. 33; xxiv. 23, 27.) And even to this day we see the efficacy of his sufferings, in the spirit they have added to those *epistles* which he wrote while *a prisoner of Jesus Christ*, and in that weight which such a circumstance also adds to his testimony. Let Jesus therefore lead us, and all his other servants, whithersoever he pleases, and we will bless his most mysterious conduct, in sure expectation of *that day*, when what is now most astonishing in it shall appear beautiful, and ordered for the best. SECT. XLVII. 14

It is pleasant to observe the honour paid to Mnason, as *an old disciple*: An honourable title indeed it is; and wherever it is found, may *days speak, and the multitude of years teach wisdom!* (Job xxxii. 7.) And may there be a readiness, as in this *good old man*, to employ all the remaining vigour of nature, be it more or less, in the service of Christ, and in the offices of cordial love and generous friendship to those who are engaged in the work of the Lord. 16

SECT. XLVIII.

Paul being arrived at Jerusalem, after an interview with James and the elders of the church there, is assaulted by the Jews while worshipping in the temple, and rescued by Lysias the Roman officer from the extremest danger of being torn in pieces by their fury. Acts XXI. 17—36.

Acts XXI. 17.

AND when we were come to Jerusalem,

Acts XXI. 17.

IN the preceding section we gave an account of our setting out on our journey from Cæsarea, *and* now we are to add, that *when we were arrived at Jerusalem, the brethren* there *received* SECT. XLVIII. Acts XXI. 17.

SECT. XLVIII.

Acts XXI. 18.

received us with great *pleasure* and affection[a]. *And the next day Paul* took us with him, who had attended him in his journey, and *entered in with us to* the house of *James* the apostle, commonly called James the Less, or the Lord's brother; *and all the elders* of the flourishing church in that city *were present* there, to receive so important a visitant, of whose arrival and

19 errand they had heard. *And* Paul, *having embraced them* with great affection, presented us that were of his company to them; and after this *he gave them a particular account of* all *those things which God had done among the Gentiles by his ministry* since he last left Jerusalem, informing them of the success that he had met with in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus; of the churches he had planted in all those places, and of the opportunity he had enjoyed of visiting most of them a second time; as well as of taking a review of those in Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lystra, and other parts of Asia, with the plantation of which they had formerly been made acquainted. (Acts xv. 4.) And he concluded with an account of those alms which he had brought from the Gentile converts, for the relief of their brethren of the circumcision at Jerusalem.

20 *And when they heard* [*it,*] *they glorified the Lord* Jesus Christ, for this wonderful demonstration of his presence and grace with his servant; *and* then they *said to him*, Dear and honoured *brother*, we rejoice from our hearts in the triumphs of the gospel among the Gentiles; and as we doubt not but the whole body of the Christian church is dear to thee, as well as to us, we assure ourselves thou wilt candidly join in all prudent endeavours for removing any prejudices which may have been weakly imbibed, to the injury of that mutual affection which we so earnestly desire to cultivate: In a word, *thou seest* with thine own eyes, *how many myriads of believing Jews there are*[b], who are gathered

lem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law.

[a] *The brethren received us with* great *pleasure* and affection.] The *alms* he brought with him would be *one*, though far from being *the only* or the chief circumstance of endearment; so that *the prayers* of his Christian friends were answered, *that his ministry with respect to Jerusalem* (η εις Ιερουσαλημ) *might be acceptable to the saints*, Rom. xv. 31.

[b] *How many myriads of believing Jews there are.*] I do not apprehend, that it can be certainly argued from hence, that there were more than *thirty*, or even *twenty thousand Jewish believers* now present at Jerusalem; for the word μυριας may only in general denote *a great number*; but it is certain, that the greater part of them were not stated *inhabitants of Jerusalem*, but only visited

gathered together from all parts to Jerusalem, on occasion of this feast; *and they are* in the general persons who are *all zealous for the* observation of the Mosaic *law*, as supposing it of perpetual obligation on all our nation, without excepting those that have embraced Christianity.

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

21 *Now* so it is, that through the prejudice and falsehood of thine enemies, *they have been*, (we doubt not, very falsely) *informed of thee, that* wherever thou comest *thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentile nations to apostatize from* the law of *Moses*[c]; *saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the* other rites and *customs* which we have learned from our forefathers, as of divine institution.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

22 *What is it then* which may not be apprehended on such an occasion? *The multitude*, no doubt, who have been thus informed of thee, *must by all means come together*, to observe thy conduct narrowly; *for they will* soon have notice of thy being here, and must needs *hear that thou art come*; and they immediately will form their judgment of the truth or falsehood of the information they have received, by what they discover in thy present behaviour of regard or disregard to the Mosaic ceremonies:

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee; we have four men which have a vow on them;

23 And *therefore*, to shew them that how far soever thou art from imposing them as necessary to salvation, or teaching men to seek justification by them, yet thou dost not think there is any intrinsic evil in them, nor teach it as a matter of duty, that believers in Christ should disuse and reject them; *do this that we say to thee*[d], and

visited it on occasion of this great *festival*; (compare ver. 27;) so that no certain argument can be deduced from hence, as to the *plurality of congregations* supposed to have been now under the care of *the bishop of Jerusalem*, if there were indeed *any Christian officer* who had *that title* so early, which it does not appear from *scripture* that there was. It is surprising therefore, that the ingenious Mr. Slater should lay so much stress upon *this text* in his *Original Draught of the primitive churches*.

c *Thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentile nations to apostatize from Moses.*] It is a leading observation of that vain and unhappy man Mr. Toland, in his *Nazarenus*, which he grounds principally on *this text* and history, that the *gospel* never designed to set the Jews at liberty from the law of Moses, except with regard to *sacrifices*, though he allows, that the Gentiles were not intended to be subject to it. (See *Nazaren.* p. 85, 36.) But it is evident, that he fell into that erroneous opinion, (so directly contrary to many other *scriptures*, such as, for instance, Rom. xiv. 14; Eph. ii. 14, 15; Col. ii. 14—17; 1 Tim. iv. 4; 2 Cor. iii. 9—11; Heb. viii. 13;) by not attending to a most obvious *medium* between *enforcing it* on their consciences as *necessary* and *condemning it* as *unlawful*. I have strongly expressed *this medium* in the *paraphrase* on ver. 23 and 25.

d *Do this that we say to thee.*] To interpret *this advice* given to the great *apostle of the Gentiles* by the body of these *elders*, as an authoritative *episcopal command*, would be apparently absurd; and yet it is the only passage in the whole context, that glances at all that way.

SECT. XLVIII.

Acts XXI. 23.

and let us counsel thee to take this method, as the best expedient we can think of, for immediately taking off any ill impressions which might otherwise be apprehended. *There are with us four men, who* are converts to the gospel, and *have* at present *a vow* of Nazariteship

24 *upon them:* Now we would advise thee to *take them* as thy companions and partners, *and purify thyself with them,* according to the Jewish ritual; *and be at* all the necessary *charges with them, that they may shave their heads,* and offer the sacrifices which the law has appointed in that case[e]: *And* then *all* that come up to the temple, and see thee in these circumstances, *will know* by their own observation, *that there is nothing* of truth and reality *in those things which they have heard of thee; but that* instead of forbidding these observances to others, *thou thyself walkest regularly*[f], *keeping the law,* and avoid-

25 ing all occasion of offence. *And as for the believing Gentiles,* thou knowest *we have written* some time ago to them, *determining that they should* think themselves obliged to *observe none of these things; except it be to keep themselves from what is offered to idols, and from blood, and from that which is strangled, and from fornication.* (Chap. xv. 28, 29.) And as we all concurred in this decree, they cannot imagine what thou mayest now do, according to the advice we give thee,

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know, that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from straugled, and from fornication.

e *Be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads.*] Josephus not only tells us in general, that it was customary with persons in any sickness or distress, to *make vows*, and to spend at least *thirty days* in extraordinary devotions, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 15, § 1,) but also says, that, when Agrippa came to Jerusalem, he offered *sacrifices of thanksgiving*, and ordered a good number of Nazarites to be *shaved;* (*Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 6, [al. 5,] § 1,) a phrase exactly answering to this; from whence Dr. Lardner (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 9, § 7, Vol. I. p. 473, 474,) very naturally argues, that *to be at charges with Nazarites,* was both a common and very popular thing among the Jews. The learned Witsius also has long since produced a most apposite passage from Maimonides, in which he expressly asserts, that a person, who was not himself a Nazarite, might bind himself by a vow to *take part with one* in his sacrifice. (*Wits. Meletem. cap.* x. § 3, p. 149.) The *charges* of these *four Nazarites* would be the price of *eight lambs* and *four rams*, besides *oil, flour*, &c. Numb. vi. 14, 15.

f *That thou thyself walkest regularly.*] It is indeed very evident from hence, as Mr. Locke well observes, (*on the Epistles*, p. 4,) that, whatever might have passed between Paul and James on this head *in private*, (compare Gal. ii. 2,) James and *the brethren* thought it most regular and convenient, that the *Jewish ritual* should still be observed by *those of the circumcision* who believed in Christ; and considering what tribulation *the church at Jerusalem* must otherwise have been exposed to by the *Sanhedrim*, who no doubt would have *prosecuted them* to the utmost *as apostates*, and also how soon Providence intended to render *the practice of it impossible*, and to break the whole power of the Jews by *the destruction of the temple*, and *city*, and *nation*, it was certainly *the most orderly* and prudent conduct *to conform to it*, though it were looked upon by those that understood the matter fully, (which it was not necessary that all should,) as *antiquated* and *ready to vanish away.* Heb. viii. 13.

g *Paul*

thee, at all inconsistent with asserting their liberty, in the manner thou so constantly dost: Nor will this be any proof at all that thou thinkest the observance of these ceremonies necessary to the salvation even of believing Jews, though duty, prudence, and charity, may in some particular instances dictate a conformity to them.

sect. xviii. Acts xxi.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Now *then*, as this was the unanimous advice of James and the brethren, *Paul* on mature deliberation determined to comply with the proposal; and accordingly he *took the men* who had engaged in the vow, *and the* very *next day being purified with them*, according to the rites of the law, he *entered* with them *into the temple*[g], *declaring* to the priests who were in waiting there, the purpose he had formed for *the accomplishment of the days of purification, till an offering should be offered for every one of them*, as the Mosaic ritual required (Numb. vi. 13, and seq.;) that so all proper preparations might be made for that purpose. 26

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help; This is the man that teacheth all

But as the seven days which were to complete this affair *were about to be accomplished*[h], *the Jews that were* come *from Asia* to celebrate the feast of Pentecost[i], *seeing him in the temple, threw all the populace into confusion, and laid* violent *hands upon him* in a most tumultous and outrageous manner; *Crying out* to all that were present, *Ye men of Israel, help;* and exert that pious zeal which so provoking and heinous a circumstance must 27 28

[g] *Paul took the men, and the next day being purified with them*, &c.] If any thing more than has already been said seem necessary to vindicate *the brethren* in giving, and Paul in taking *this advice*, which I cannot think there does, the reader may consult *Calvin's note*, here, and *Wits. Meletem, cap.* x. § 4—6, p. 150—152.

[h] *As the seven days were about to be accomplished.*] Beza supposes, that by these *seven days* are meant *the seven weeks* that introduced the feast of *Pentecost*, which was usually called *the feast of weeks*, or that at least we are to understand them of *the last week* before it; but it is much more natural to refer them to the *days of purification*, which were to be completed, before the *sacrifices* should be offered that were to close *the vow*. It is however inconsistent with what follows to render the words ἐμέλλον συνίλεισθαι, that they *were almost ended*, as if the tumult in the temple happened *towards the conclusion* of these *seven days*, when Paul declares to Felix, in the defence he made before him *eight days after he was seized*, that it was then *but twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem;* (chap. xxiv. 11;) and it is evident, it was not till the *third day* after his coming thither, that Paul began his purification. The phrase implies no more, than that *the seven days were about to be accomplished*; and, by comparing chap. xxi. 18, 26; xxii. 30; xxiii. 12, 32; xxiv. 1, 11, it appears that the time of *his seizure* must needs have been *towards the beginning* of them.

[i] *The Jews that were from Asia.*] Paul had lately spent *three years* in preaching there, and, notwithstanding the success his labours were attended with, had met with *great opposition* from *these people;* (compare Acts xix. 9; xx. 3, 31; 1 Cor. xvi. 9;) so that it is no wonder, *these* should be *the leaders* in such an assault upon him.

[k] *Teaches*

SECT. xlviii.

Acts XXI.

must surely excite; for *this is the* wretched and detestable *man, that every where teaches all men* a set of principles most directly *contrary to the people* of the Jews, *and the* divine *law* we have
28 received by Moses; *and to this* sacred and venerable *place* [k], which hath been erected for the service of God at so vast an expence, and so solemnly devoted to him: *And* on these malignant principles he *hath even brought Greeks into the temple*, within that inclosure which no foreigner may enter [l], *and* thereby hath *polluted*
29 *this holy place*; and so has justly forfeited his life to its injured honours. *For they had before seen Trophimus the Ephesian*, who had attended him in his late journey, (chap. xx. 4.) *in the city with him, whom they* rashly *imagined that Paul had brought* with him *into* that part of *the temple* which was appropriated to native Jews, or to such as were proselyted by circumcision to the entire observation of their law.

all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place; and farther, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him, in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 *And the whole city was moved* on this occasion, *and there was* presently *a* tumultuous *concourse of the people; and laying hold on Paul* in a furious manner, *they dragged him out of the temple*, that it might not be defiled with his blood: *And immediately the gates were shut* by order of the proper officer, to prevent any farther riot or violation of those sacred inclosures, as well as to exclude Paul from seeking any sanctury at the horns of the altar.

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 *And when* the multitude, who had now got him in their cruel hands, were so outrageous that *they went about to kill him* [m], *word was brought to*

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief

k *Teaches——contrary to this place,*] Every thing *contrary to the law* would be justly interpreted as *contrary to the temple*, which was so evidently supported by a regard to it. But perhaps Paul might have declared, that *the destruction of the temple* was approaching; which declaration, we know, was charged on Stephen as a great crime; Acts vi. 14.

l *Brought Greeks into the temple*, within that inclosure, &c.] It is very evident, and universally acknowledged, that any *stranger* might worship in that which was called *the court of the Gentiles*; but these zealots, without any proof, but an uncertain conjecture and rumour, imagined Paul had brought some *uncircumcised Greeks* into the *inner part of the court*, which was appropriated to the *people of Israel*, as was notified by the *Greek* and *Latin inscription* on several of the pilars which stood in the wall that separated it; Μη δει αλλοφυλον παριεναι, *No foreigner must enter here.* (*Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5, [al. vi. 6,) § 2; & *lib.* vi. *cap.* 2, [al. vii. 4.] § 4.] But it is to be observed by the way, that *a proselyte*, who by *circumcision* had declared his submission to, and acceptance of the whole *Jewish religion*, was no longer looked upon as *a foreigner*, but as one *naturalized*, and so *a fellow-citizen*, to which there may be an allusion, Eph. ii. 19.

m *They went about to kill him.*] Philo says, that any *uncircumcised person*, who came within the separating wall mentioned above, might be *stoned to death* without any farther process, (*Legat. ad Cai.* p. 1022) which is confirmed by the last passage quoted from Josephus; but, had Paul indeed brought such a one thither, *that rule* (allowing

chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar:

to Lysias, the chief officer of the Roman garrison, who was *the tribune of the cohort*, and was called by the Greek title of Chiliarch, from his having (as that word signifies) a thousand men with their proper centurions under his command; and as a detachment of his men kept guard in the outer portico of the temple during the public festival, to prevent any tumult[n], he was soon informed by those upon duty *that all* the city of *Jerusalem was in confusion*. This presently alarmed the tribune, *who* knowing how much it was his concern to check such turbulent proceedings, *immediately took soldiers and* some of the *centurions* belonging to the cohort with him, *and ran in among them* to suppress the riot: The Jews were therefore stopped before they could accomplish their design, *and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers* come among them, *they ceased from beating Paul*[o]; which they had began to do in such a manner, that had he not been thus seasonably rescued in this critical moment, his life must soon have fallen a sacrifice to their rage. *Then the tribune drew near, and took him* into his custody; *and* supposing him to be some very criminal and obnoxious person, in order to prevent his escape, he *commanded him to be bound with two chains: And* as he found the people so enraged against him, he *inquired* of those that were the forwardest among them, *who he was*, that such a general outcry had been raised against him, *and what he had done* to deserve it?

SECT. XLVIII.

Acts XXI. 31

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

32

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

33

34 And some cried one

And such was the confusion of this riotous assembly,

34

(allowing its authority) could not have affected *him*, since he himself was a Jew. Yet what the Jews called *the judgment of zeal* would no doubt have been pleaded to *justify the murder*, had it been perpetrated according to their wicked intent.

n Kept guard in the outer portico of the temple, &c.] Josephus assures us, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5, [al. vi. 6,] § 8,) that a detachment of the armed *soldiers*, belonging to the *Roman legion* which lodged in the adjacent *castle of Antonia*, kept guard in the *porticoes of the temple*, which surrounded *the court of the Gentiles* on feast-days to prevent disorders; and he has another passage to the same purpose, *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 5, [al. 4,] § 3.]—It is evident, that Lysias was *not present*, when this tumult began. I think it probable, as Dr. Lardner conjectures, (*Credib.* Book I, chap. 2. § 14, Vol. I. p. 221, 222,) that he was the *oldest Roman tribune* at Jerusalem, and was the *commanding officer* at the castle above-mentioned, and of *the legion* quartered there.

o *They ceased from beating Paul.*] It is said just before, *they went about to kill him*, which they intended to have done, as Dr. Lightfoot has observed, by what the Jews were used to call *the beating of the rebels*, in which they did not stay for any legal process, but, having found that any had *profaned the temple*, the people rushed immediately upon them, and, having dragged them out, *beat them with staves and stones* in such a cruel manner, that they often died under their hands. (See *Dr. Lightf. Chron. in loc.* and *Service of the Temple*, chap. i. § 3.) And thus they would have treated Paul upon a mere pretence, had they not been prevented by the coming of the *tribune*.

p *When*

SECT. XLVIII.

Acts XXI.

assembly, that *some among the multitude cried out one thing, and some another: And as* the tribune saw it was in vain to think the matter should be cleared at present, and that *he could not know*

34 *the certainty* of any thing *by reason of the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle* of Antonia, where the Roman garrison was

35 kept. *But when he was upon the stairs* which led up from the nearest gate of the temple to it[p], *it came to pass that he was borne* up from the ground *by the soldiers* who had him in charge, *because of the violence of the croud.*

36 *For the multitude of the people* pressed after and *followed* him as far as they could; and when he was out of their reach, pursued him still with clamorous invectives, eagerly *crying out, Away with him,* away with him; for he deserves the worst of punishments, and should immediately be put to death.

one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

93 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 19 IT is delightful to observe, how the *same principles* of humble and benevolent *piety* wrought in the mind of Paul on the one hand, on the other in those of James and the *brethren of the circumcision;* while the one recounted, and the other rejoiced in *what God had done by his ministry among the Gentiles.* May *ministers* always remember, that whatever good is *done by their ministry,* it is *the work of God,* and that *the praise* is to be rendered *to him:* And, O! that whenever they assemble and *meet with each other* for religious and friendly conference, they may have cause for *mutual thankfulness* while they hear and tell what *efficacy* God is putting into *the word,* as spoken by them; which is never like to be *greater* that when the *ministers* of it appear *least in their own eyes.*

20 & *seq.* A prudent *precaution,* consistent with the strictest *integrity,* discovered itself in *the advice* which James and the Jewish Christians gave to their beloved brother Paul on this occasion, *to conform* to the customs of the Mosaic worship, in an affair in which he very innocently might do it; thereby to shew, that he was not *a slave to ceremonial institutions,* so neither was he *a bigotted zealot against them;* nor one that made it a point of humour to oppose them in

[p] *When he was upon the stairs.*] These *stairs* are particularly mentioned in the passage from Josephus, which is referred to in the beginning of *note* [n]; and it appears by the account he gives, that the *castle* was situated at an angle of the temple, and had a number of *stairs* descending both to the western and the northern *portico.*

in *matters of indifference*, and to father that opposition on *conscience*. When will the *leaders of our churches* agree to teach their followers by such wise and mild examples, to study the honour, and comfort, and usefulness, of each other, *pursuing the things that make for peace, and* tend to promote *mutual edification?* (Rom. xiv. 19.) SECT. XLVIII. Ver.

Yet what *prudence*, or what *integrity*, may not sometimes be *mistaken* or misrepresented? What *good* may not be *evil spoken of*, and abused as *a cloak for mischief*, when men's hearts are overflowing with *malice*, and are so wretchedly corrupted as to take pleasure in indulging it under the disguise of religion? What numerous *falsehoods* attended the *charge* which those furious Jews brought against Paul, in every article of it? Yet it is *believed*, on the credit of *a noisy rabble*; and it was owing to the gracious *interposition* of a very remarkable Providence, that *this light of Israel* was not immediately *quenched*; and that *this holy apostle* was not *torn in pieces* by an outrageous mob, fierce and irrational as so many *wild beasts*, before he could have any liberty to *speak for himself*. 28

Let not *religion* be *condemned unheard*, and then surely it *cannot be condemned* at all: Let us with pleasure reflect, that *God* can raise up *guardians to it* from the most unexpected quarter, and animate men, like *this Roman officer*, from considerations merely secular, *to appear* most seasonably and effectually *in the defence* of his faithful servants. Let us adore the wise conduct of *Providence* in instances like these; and let us always *pursue our duty* with courage, since God can never be at a loss for *expedients to secure us* in our adherence to it. 31-36

SECT. XLIX.

Paul makes a speech to the people at Jerusalem, in which he gives them a particular account of the means by which he was engaged to embrace and preach the gospel. Acts XXI. 37, *to the end*, XXII. 1—16.

Acts XXI. 37.

AND as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

Acts XXI. 37.

IT has been shewn how Paul was rescued from the tumult of the Jews, who would have killed him; and with what violence they followed him with their cries, when he was taken from them: *But as Paul was going to be brought into the castle*, to which the Roman soldiers were conducting him, *he said to the tribune* who commanded them, *May I be allowed to speak* a few words *to thee? And* when the tribune heard him SECT. XLIX. Acts XXI. 37

SECT. XLIX.

Acts XXI. 38

speak in the Greek language, *he said* in some surprise, What, *canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian who didst* some time *before these days stir up a sedition, and lead out into the wilderness four thousand murderers*[a], who committed horrible depredations there on all who were so unhappy as to come within their reach? The public is so exasperated against thee, that it naturally occurred to my mind thou mightest be that most desperate of criminals. *But Paul said* to him, Thou art entirely mistaken, both as to my person and character, as I hope fully to convince thee; for *I am* no Egyptian, but am *indeed a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia*, and therefore *a citizen of no inconsiderable city*[b]; *and I intreat thee* thou wouldst favour me so far, as to *permit me to speak to the people*, who by this unreasonable attack upon me, shew how little they know of me; and for their sakes as well as my own, I could wish them to be better informed. *And on his giving him permission* to say what he pleased, *Paul, standing on the stairs* that led up to the castle, *beckoned with his hand to the people; and when* he found *there was a great silence*, and they were ready to attend to what

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great silence, he

a *Art not thou that Egyptian*, &c.] Josephus (as almost all the learned *commentators* on this verse have observed,) expressly mentions this *Egyptian impostor*, as coming into Judea while Felix was governor there, where he had been *some years* before this tumult. (Compare Acts xxiv. 10.) By his account of him it appears, that, calling himself *a prophet*, he took many of the common people with him from Jerusalem, and, having brought them through *the wilderness*, and increased the number of his followers to *thirty thousand*, he led them to *mount Olivet*, promising them, that at his command the walls of Jerusalem should fall down, that they might enter the city; but the Jews, instead of joining with them, stood on their defence; and, Felix marching out against him with the Roman soldiers, he was deserted by his followers, and fled with a few of his chief adherents, most of which were either taken or slain, but the Egyptian himself made his escape. (See *Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 13, [al. 12,] § 5; & *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8, [al. 6,] § 6.] There is indeed a considerable difference between the *sacred historian* and Josephus, as to the *numbers* mentioned by each; for the reconciling of which I refer my reader to the learned Mr. Ward's solution of this difficulty, as reported by Dr. Lardner; (*Credib.* Book II. chap. 8, Vol. II. p. 497, & *seq.*) and conclude this *note* with the just remark of Dr. Lardner, as to the great accuracy with which Luke has represented Lysias speaking of this matter. The men were *led into the wilderness*, the impostor's *name* was *unknown*, he being only called *an Egyptian*; he had *escaped alive*; and most of his followers had deserted him; so that *a tumult of the Jews* about him would have been no unnatural circumstance, (as some have objected,) since he had long ceased to be their idol.

b *A citizen of no inconsiderable city.*] The inhabitants of Tarsus, which seems to have taken its name from Tarshish the son of Javan, (Gen. x. 4,) boasted extremely of their *antiquity*, as Dio Chrysostom observes, *Orat.* 33. *ad Tarsenses*; and Strabo tells us, (*Geograph. lib.* xiv. p. 463,) that they were so considerable on account of learning, as well as commerce, wealth, and grandeur, that they might dispute the prize with Athens and Alexandria.——Paul, by saying he was *a Jew of Tarsus*, proved that he had *a right* to be in the temple.

c *Born*

SECT. xlix.

Acts XXI. 40

he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue saying,

what he said, *he addressed them in* the Syriac tongue, which was then the common language of the Jews, and therefore called *the Hebrew dialect;* and made a discourse to them to the following purpose, *saying,*

Acts XXII. 1

Acts XXII. 1. Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence, *which I make* now unto you.

Men, brethren, and fathers, of whatsoever age, rank, or circumstance of life, I beseech you, that you would compose yourselves patiently and candidly to *hear my apology,* [*which I make*] *now to you* for myself and my conduct; and I cannot but hope it will fully convince you, how much you have been misinformed concerning me.

2

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence; and he saith,)

(And when they heard that he addressed them in their vulgar tongue, and spake what was then called *the Hebrew dialect, they* were *the rather* disposed to hearken to him, and, numerous as the assembly was, *kept* a strict *silence; and he* went on with his discourse, and *said.)*

3

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day.

It is well known to multitudes, that *I am indeed* by birth and religion *a Jew,* who was *born at Tarsus*[c], the chief city *in* the neighbouring province of *Cilicia; but* my parents were so warmly attached to their religion, and so desirous that I might be well instructed in it, that they sent me, at a great expence, to be *educated* here *in this city, at the feet of* that celebrated teacher *Gamaliel*[d], by whom I was trained up, [*and*] *accurately instructed in the law of our fathers; being* from my very youth exceedingly *zealous for* the honour of *God* and his sacred institutions, *as you all are this day;*

4

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering

Nor was there any in those days more violent in his opposition to the religion of Jesus than I was, *who persecuted* the followers of *this* Christian *way* and manner of worship, even *to the* very

c *Born at Tarsus.*] This, as the learned Witsius well observes, *Meletem. cap.* i. § 5,) shews how little credit is to be given to the tradition mentioned by Jerom, *(de Script. Eccles. cap.* v.) that Paul was *born at Gischalis* in Judea, and driven from thence to Tarsus, when that city was sacked by the Romans, since it is directly contrary to this testimony of his own; and I mention it chiefly to shew, how soon *tradition* erred in facts of any considerable standing; nor do I remember any proof of such a devastation at Gischalis about the time of Paul's birth, which was somewhat latter than that of *our Lord.* (Compare Acts vii. 58.) I honour the testimony of *the fathers* exceedingly, when they speak on their personal knowledge: but, when they report facts said to have happened long before they were born, I dare not lay much stress upon them.

d *At the feet of Gamaliel.*] Strabo tells us, in the passage referred to above, that it was customary among the inhabitants of Tarsus for the young people, when they had gone through a course of education at home, to travel abroad for farther improvement.——Of this celebrated Gamaliel, to whom the care of Paul in his younger years was committed, see *note* f on Acts v. 34, Vol. VII. p. 559.——The phrase of being brought up *at his feet* plainly alludes to the posture in which the scholars were usually placed, who sat on the ground, or on low seats while their teacher was raised on a kind of throne. Compare Luke x. 39.

SECT. XLIX.

very *death*[e]; *binding both men and women* who professed it, without any regard to sex, age, or quality, *and delivering them* all *into prisons*[f], where they were closely and severely confined:

Acts XXII. 4

5 *As also the high-priest is my witness, and all the court of the elders*[g]; for he and all the other members of the Sanhedrim well know, how eager I was to give them all the assistance in my power towards rooting out the gospel, if possible, from the whole face of the earth: *From whom also having* several years since *received letters to the brethren*, impowering me to act against those for whom I have now so great an affection, *I went to Damascus* with a most resolute purpose, according to the tenor of my commission, *to bring those that were there*, where I imagined many might have sought a retreat, *bound to Jerusalem; that they might* take their trial here, and *be punished* according to the utmost rigour of the law. (Compare Acts ix. 1, 2.)

6 *And* if you desire, as you probably may, to know how I came so entirely to change my sentiments and measures, as to engage in the defence and service of a cause which I so earnestly had laboured to destroy, I will give you a plain and faithful account of the wonderful event which occasioned it. Be pleased therefore to observe, that *it came to pass* on that most memorable day of my whole life, *that as I was on my journey, and was* now *come nigh to Damascus*, where I had as it were my prey in view, *about noon, on a sudden, a great light shone about* 7 *me from heaven: And I fell to the ground* in unutterable astonishment, *and* at that instant *heard a voice* from heaven, *saying to me, Saul,* 8 *Saul, why dost thou persecute me? But I answered* trembling, *Who art thou, Lord?* and how is

livering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high-priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it come to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who

[e] *Persecuted this way to the death.*] We know he was concerned in *the death of* Stephen; (chap. viii. 1,) and, if he was not so in that of *many more*, it was not for want of zeal and rage, but merely of power. But there is no reason to think, that *this sacred history* contains a full account of *all the outrages* committed against Christians, during the period to which it extends.

[f] *Into prisons.*] Witsius observes here, that there were two sorts of *prisons* among the Jews; one only for confinement, the other where they were placed in most uneasy postures, and put to a kind of torture; for the illustration of which, he introduces some curious passages from the *rabbies*. See *Wits. Meletem. cap.* i. § 18.

[g] *The high-priest is my witness*] That is, I can appeal to him for the proof of this. It will not follow from hence, that he, who was *now high-priest*, also bore that office when *Paul persecuted the Christians;* he might then perhaps *be* only an inferior member of the *Sanhedrim*, on which supposition this appeal would be proper, and consequently no light can be gained from hence to fix the date of *Paul's conversion.*

h *Did*

Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*.

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the

is it that I have persecuted thee? *And he said unto me, I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest* by the furious rage with which thou art pursuing my disciples, and art endeavouring to destroy my gospel. *And they that were with me saw the light indeed, and were terrified: but they* heard only a confused sound, and *did not* distinctly *hear the voice of him that spake to me*[h]. *And I*, finding no farther disposition to oppose that glorious person, who had condescended to appear in so glorious a manner to stop my wretched career, and to expostulate thus mildly with me, when it was evident he could have destroyed me in a moment, immediately surrendered as it were at discretion, and *said, Lord, what shall I do? And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go to Damascus, and there it shall be told thee*, and a particular account shall be given thee *of all things which are appointed for thee to do*; and thou shalt be informed what extraordinary services are allotted to thee, after all thou hast done against my cause and interest. *And as*, when I was risen from the ground, *I could not see by reason of the glory of that light* which had broke in upon me, with so bright a lustre as quite to dazzle and blind my eyes, *being led by the hand of those that were with me, I came to Damascus.*

And one Ananias, a pious man according to the law, whose acceptance of the gospel had by no means destroyed his regard to the Mosaic institutions, and *who* on that account *had an honourable character among all the Jews who dwelt* [*at Damascus*] was sent to visit me: And *coming to me* by a divine appointment, *and standing by me* as I lay blind upon my bed, he *said to me, Brother Saul, look up*, and fix thine eyes

SECT. xlix. Acts XXII. 8. 9 10 11 12 13

h *Did not* distinctly *hear the voice*, &c.] To what I have said on chap. ix. 7. § 19, note i. p. 34, I shall only add a remark of Mr. Fleming, (*Christol.* Vol. I. p. 103,) that as in the castle of Cleves, (and he might have added in the cathedral of St. Paul's, and elsewhere) there is *a gallery* so contrived, that two persons, standing with their backs to each other in opposite parts of it, may distinctly *hear each other*, while a person standing between them in the middle *can hear neither*; it is easily conceivable, that the air might, by the ministry of angels, or the immediate power of Christ, be *so disposed*, as to produce such a phenomenon. But I do not apprehend, that, had this been the case, *Paul's companions*, would have heard a confused sound, as I think it is strongly intimated they did. —Elsner has shewn in a curious note here, that the Heathens thought *divine voices* as well as *visions* might affect one person in a company, without being perceived by the rest. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 466—468.—I give the story here without any large paraphrase, referring to § 19, p. 31, *& seq.* where it first occurs, for any further explication or illustration it may need.

SECT. XLIX.

Acts XXII. 14

eyes upon me. *And in that very hour* and moment I found my sight rsstored; so that *I looked up upon him*, and saw him distinctly.

the same hour I looked up upon him.

And he then addressed me in words which I shall never forget, and which have since been remarkably illustrated; for *he said*, My dear brother, *the God of our fathers hath fore-ordained thee to know his will*, as now manifested in his gospel, *and to see that righteous person* whom our nation so ungratefully rejected and crucified; *and* hath even granted thee the singular favour *to hear a voice from his* own *mouth*[i]; though he be now ascended to the

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 regions of celestial glory: And this *because* he intends to qualify thee for the most honourable and important service in his church; for *thou shalt be his* authentic *witness to all men* to whom thou mayest come, *of those* wonderful *things which thou hast seen and heard* on this extraordinary occasion. *And now*, considering this,

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 *why dost thou delay* in the most solemn manner to declare thy joyful acceptance of these benefits? *Arise* immediately, *and be baptized*, and thereby take the method which Christ has appointed to *wash away thy sins*[k]; declaring thy desire of renouncing them, and *invoking the name of the Lord* Jesus, who has so mercifully interposed to deliver thee from them, and made that ordinance a token of remission.

16 And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6 & *seq.* By whatever methods God hath been pleased to bring us *home to himself*, and to introduce into our minds the saving light of his gospel, we shall have long, and indeed everlasting reason, to *recollect it with pleasure*; especially when he hath gone in any remarkable

i *To see that rightrous person, and to hear a voice from his mouth.* I see no reason at all to refer this (as Lord Barrington and Dr. Benson do,) to a *future vision of Christ* and a *future commission* to be received from him. It plainly appears from Paul's own narration, that he had already seen him, and heard him speak. It is therefore most evidently natural to refer it to the *past* rather than to a *future event*, though I own it may include both.

k *Be baptized, and wash away thy sins.*] *Baptism* in the adult, excepting in the very peculiar instance of our Lord, was a token of *confession* and *humiliation for sin*, (on which account it is called *the baptism of repentance*, Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3. Acts xiii. 24. xix. 4. and of *a desire to be cleansed from it*, as the body was *by water* cleansed from its pollution; and being administered to such *professed penitents*, by divine appointment, as a token of favourable regard to them, it was *a seal of pardon*. Nor did God ordinarily give any particular person any public and visible token of *pardon*, till he submitted to *baptism*; and this may explain, in what sense *baptism* might be said to *wash away sins*, and elsewhere to save. (Compare 1 Pet. iii. 21.) See Acts ii. 38, and the note there, Vol. VII. p 521.

remarkable manner *out of his common way* for this glorious purpose: They who have in this respect *obtained mercy of the Lord,* should undoubtedly make it their care *often to recollect* the particular circumstances, and should be ready on every proper occasion to recount those wonders of power and love, for the encouragement and instruction of others. (Compare 1 Tim. i. 16.) SECT. xlix. Ver. 6

The learned education which Paul had received *at the feet of Gamaliel,* was once no doubt the matter of *his boasting and confidence.* Unsanctified learning *made his bonds strong,* and furnished him with many a specious argument to oppose the gospel: Yet when divine grace changed his heart, and turned *these accomplishments* into another channel, they made the conquest so much the more glorious, and rendered him *the fitter instrument* to subserve God's wise and merciful purposes, for the defence and propagation of christianity by his means. Wherever learning is possessed, may it be so directed and improved; and wherever it is perverted and abused, may Christ manifest his victorious power, to *cast down imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself,* in rebellion *against him,* till *every thought be brought into* a willing and thankful subjection to his authority. (2 Cor. x. 5. 3

Adored be the condescension of that blessed Redeemer, which spared this prostrate enemy, and reduced him by the tender expostulations of mercy, rather than the terrors of wrath; exerting that secret *transforming power* upon his heart, without which this miracle astonishing as it was, would have had no thorough and abiding effect. *Speak,* O Lord, *from heaven* to them that ignorantly *persecute thee;* and make them humbly willing to *receive the law from thy mouth.* Job xxii. 22. 7, 8, 10

If they who saw this tremendous scene, and the astonishing consequences of it, were not themselves *subdued to the gospel,* as it doth not appear that they were, it must certainly be a sad illustration of the hardness of the human heart, almost beyond parallel; especially when we consider how eager Paul would undoubtedly be, to make those who had been *the associates of his crime* the partners of his faith, service, and hope, as a christian. But however these efforts might miscarry with respect to them, there were those *who glorified God in him,* (Gal. i. 24.) Let us take *this renewed opportunity* of doing it, and as he is still by his writings *a glorious witness to Christ* among us, *on whom the ends of the world are come,* let us, by *receiving his testimony* with a most cheerful assent, *set to our seal that God is true,* John iii. 33. 9, 11, 15

SECT.

SECT. L.

Paul, proceeding in his defence to the Jews at Jerusalem, is interrupted in his remarkable story by their violence; and when about to be scourged by order of the Tribune, is exempted from it on pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen. Acts XXII. 17—29.

ACTS XXII. 17.

SECT. I.

PAUL went on to give the Jews, to whom he was addressing himself from the stairs of the castle of Antonia in Jerusalem, an account of some farther circumstances relating to the reason he had to engage in the cause of christianity: *And* he proceeded, saying, *It came to pass, that* after I had preached Christ boldly in Damascus and Arabia, *when I was returned to Jerusalem*[a] *and was praying* here in the court of *the temple* now before your eyes, *I was in a* 18 kind of *trance* or extacy:[b] *And I saw him*, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and heard him *saying to me, Make haste* from this dangerous place with all the diligence that may be, *and depart quickly from Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me*, but, on the contrary, will rather attempt thy destruction.

Acts XXII 17

19 *And I* was so desirous of continuing my labours with my dear countrymen, and so unwilling

ACTS XXII. 17.

AND it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they

a *When I was returned to Jerusalem.*] Lord Barrington (*Miscell. Sacra. Abstract*, p. 19. and Essay iii. p. 11, *&c. seq.*) and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 6, *&c. seq.*) suppose this memorable circumstance (which they make *Paul's mission* to the *idolatrous Gentiles*,) to have happened in the *second journey*, he made to Jerusalem, A. D. 44. (which is mentioned by Luke in Acts xi. 30. xii. 25.) and maintain, it was the *same extacy*, with that referred to, 2 Cor. xii. 2. as having happened *fourteen years* before the date of *that epistle*. I rather think the expression intimates, that it was on his *first return to Jerusalem* that he had this vision in the temple; and what he pleads here, (ver. 19, 20. as to the probability of *their receiving his testimony*, suits that circumstance of time much better than the other. His *dispute* with some Hellenist Jews, who toward the close of his *first visit* to Jerusalem attempted to *kill him*, (chap. 9, 29) engaged *the brethren* also to hasten his departure; and *our Lord's orders to him* at this critical season might determine him to yield to their instances, which perhaps his desire and hope of usefulness at Jerusalem might otherwise have opposed. But, when he had been forced in that manner to *flee for his life*, while the memory of his *zeal against christianity* was comparatively fresh in their memory, it does not seem natural to suppose he would have pleaded the probability of their regarding it after an interval of *six years*, more, which, according to the chronology of these ingenious writers, must have been the case.

b *I was in a* kind of *trance* or extacy.] See note g on chap. x. 10, p. 55. Perhaps he might continue standing all the while with an intenseness of countenance, which, if it were observed by any near him, might be imputed to the fixedness of his devotion, or, if he fell *down*, it might be looked upon as an *epileptic fit*. All that he saw and heard was to be sure only a miraculous impression on his own nerves, not to be perceived by any other persons.

c *Scourging*

they know that I imprisoned, and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

unwilling to give them up as desperate, that I presumed to expostulate with Christ himself on this occasion, and *said, Lord,* I cannot but hope that my addresses to them will be attended with success; for as Jerusalem has been witness to the zeal with which I once opposed thy gospel, *they* to whom I would speak cannot but *know, that* with the utmost eagerness and cruelty *I was* but a little while ago *imprisoning and scourging in the synagogue*[c] all *them that believed in thee,* whenever I could get them into mine hands:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

20 *And* that *when the blood of Stephen, thy* faithful and courageous *martyr, was* unjustly and barbarously *shed,* almost on this very spot of ground, *I also was standing by, and consenting to his slaughter, and* was so officious on the occasion, that I even *kept the garments of those that slew him:* (Chap. vii. 58.) I may expect therefore, that a testimony from me will be heard with some peculiar regard, when they see that the evidences of thy gospel were strong enough to conquer such inveterate prejudices, and such furious rage against it.

21 And he said unto me, Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

21 But the Lord over-ruled my plea by a renewal of his charge, *and he said to me,* Reason no farther on this subject, but *go thy way* immediately, according to my directions; *for,* behold *I will send thee far off to the Gentiles,* and thou shalt preach the gospel, and publish the glad tidings of salvation with much greater encouragement and success among them.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

22 *And they heard him* with quietness and attention *to this word, and* [*then*] were so enraged, as soon as he began to speak of a mission to the Gentiles, and this too in such light, as if the Jews were in a manner given up and rejected, that they were no longer able to bear it; but *lifted up their voice* in a most outrageous cry, *saying, Away with this* blasphemous *fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live* any longer

[c] *Scourging in the synagogues.*] It is strange, that Beza (on Mat. x. 17,) should think this so incredible, as to suspect *the reading* is *corrupted,* when the same phrase occurs again, Mat. xxiii. 34, as well as in the passage before us; nor is there any need we should suppose, that *synagogues* must signify not places of *religious* but *civil assemblies,* when, besides what Vitringa has alledged in confirmation of the use of such a practice from the Jewish writers, (*Synag. Vet. lib.* iii. Part I. *cap.* 11.) Epiphanius directly mentions a fact of this kind, (contra *Hæres. tom* ii. *lib.* 1, p. 135,) and it appears, from what Eusebius had cited from a writer against the Montanists, to have been no uncommon case. (*Eccles. Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 16, p. 230.) The custom has since been confirmed and illustrated in the celebrated instance of Acosta. (*Limborch. Collat. cum. Jud.* p. 349, 350.) Comp. *note* a on Mat. x. 17, Vol. VI. p. 394.

SECT. I.

longer upon it; since he hath proved himself such a traitor to God and his chosen people, that he would presume, even by his own confession, to prefer the Gentiles to us, as if they were more interested than we in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. And while they said this they affected to break out into all the forms of lamentation, as well as expressions of rage, as if such a degree of impiety had never been heard of before.

Acts XXII. 22

23 *And as they were crying out* in this furious manner, *and were rending their garments* in token of indignation and horror at this pretended blasphemy, *and casting dust into the air*, that it might fall down on their heads, and so they might appear more completely in the habit of mourners for the dishonour done to God and his

23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 people; *The Tribune*, not knowing the particulars of what had passed; but perceiving by the effect, that Paul had exasperated rather than appeased them by the apology he had been permitted to make, *commanded that he should be brought into the castle; and* as no witnesses regularly appeared to give information against him, he *ordered that he should be put to the question* by *scourging* him in the severest manner[d]; *that* so *he might know* from his own confession, since he could learn it no other way, *for what cause they raised such an outcry against him.*

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging: that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 *And as they were binding him with thongs* for this purpose, *Paul said to the centurion who stood by* to command the guard upon this occasion, *Is it* indeed *lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman* citizen[e], *and* this too while he is *uncondemned?* Consider before you do this how you will answer for the violation of my privilege of which at a proper time you must expect

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 hereafter to hear. *And the centurion hearing* [*this*] presently *went and told the Tribune, saying, Consider what you are about to do*, or you may be intangled in a difficulty of which you seem not to be aware; *for this man* says, he *is a Roman*, and consequently protected by the privileges of a free citizen from such usage as is

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest; for this man is a Roman.

[d] *Be put to the question by scourging.*] That the Romans used this method is proved by several learned writers, particularly by Dr. Lardner, *Credib.* Book I. chap. x. § 1, 2, Vol. I. p. 496—498, and Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § 8, p. 355, 356.

[e] *To scourge a man who is a Roman.*] See on this head *note* c on Acts xvi. 37, p. 152.

SECT. I.

Acts XXII. 27

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

is preparing for him. *And* upon this *the Tribune*, who was alarmed at this report, *came and said to him, Tell me* truly, as knowing how unsafe it will be to trifle with me by offering a plea of this nature, if it cannot be supported: *art thou* indeed *a Roman* citizen, as I am told thou hast asserted? *And he said, Yes*, I most assuredly am; and I am capable of producing proper evidence of it, if it be insisted upon, in due time and place. *And the Tribune answered*, I am surprized to hear this considering the appearance thou now makest; for *I*, who (as thou seest) am a person of high rank in the army, *obtained this freedom with a considerable sum of money*, which I can hardly suppose thou shouldst have been able to pay, unless there has been some extraordinary change in thy circumstances. *And Paul replied, but I* was under no necessity of making any purchase at all of this kind, for I *was free-born*[f], my father having been intitled to that honour and privilege before me.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free-born.

28

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

They therefore who were about to have put him to the question, immediately departed from him: And the Tribune was glad to compound the matter so; for he *was* much *afraid when he knew that he was* indeed *a Roman, and* was greatly concerned *because he had bound him*, in order to his being scourged; which was a breach of privilege, for which he might have been accused by Paul to his superiors. He contented himself therefore with confining him a little while, till he could bring him before the Jewish council; fearing lest if he had dismissed him immediately the Jews would be incensed against him, and he might thus have been in danger of something much worse from Paul's enraged and tumultuous enemies.

29

IMPROVE-

[f] *I was free-born.*] I cannot think with Mr. Cradock, Tillemont, and some other critics, that this was the consequence of his being *a native of Tarsus*. Dr. Lardner has, I think, produced unanswerable arguments against admitting *that city* to have been *a colony*, or what the Romans called *municipium*, that is, a place where *all the natives* were *free of Rome by birth*. I therefore think it much more probable, that *Paul's father*, or some other of his ancestors, might have been rewarded with *the freedom of the city* for his fidelity and bravery in some military service, as an auxiliary to the Romans, as Josephus says, that several Jews were. (*Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 10, [al. 17,] § 13, *& seq.*) See *Dr. Lardner, Credib.* Book I. chap. 10, § 6, Vol. I. p. 502—513. He observes in the *next section*, not only that *the freedom of the city* might be *bought*, but that some of Claudius' favourites and creatures at last sunk *the price* scandalously low.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 1. WE learn from *this scripture*, as well as from many other passages, that *our Lord Jesus Christ*, though invisible, is present
Ver. while the proclamation of his gospel is made, and is ever atten-
17, 18 tive to the temper with which it is received. Justly therefore doth he *resent the injury* that is done him, when these messages of life and peace are *neglected:* Justly doth he often in the course of his providence, *remove those ordinances* which men have ungratefully slighted, and call away the *faithful ministers* who have *stretched out their hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people.* (Rom. x. 21.)

19, 20 It is not an easy thing for *a servant of Christ*, who is deeply impressed with divine truths himself, to imagine to what a degree men are capable of *hardening their hearts* against them. They are ready sometimes to think with Paul, Surely it must be impossible for any to resist such arguments, and such addresses. But experience makes them wiser, and shews, that though they *smite the rock* again and again, it is *in vain*, till divine grace *melt it* into streams of water.

21 Blessed be God, that when his gospel is *removed from one place* it is *sent to another;* nor shall it ever be totally *rooted out* of the world *while seed-time and harvest, summer and winter*, continue their revolutions. Adored be that grace which *sent Paul* and the other apostles *to speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved!* The life of *our souls* was in that commission, and all *our eternal*
22 *hopes*, take their rise from it. But what *cruel malignity* did these Jews express, whom all the wonders of this astonishing story could not convince, nor all the eloquence of it persuade! On the contrary, for no crime but that of being made *the ambassador of divine mercy*, and the instrument of deliverance to thousands of perishing sinners, *they raise a cry* against the ambassador of God, as if he were the most impious of blasphemers, and would have hurried him from the face of the earth as *unfit to live* upon it: How much less were *they fit* to continue here. But thus *forbidding* the apostles *to speak to the Gentiles*, (as he himself observes,) *they filled up the measure of their iniquities;* so that after the abused mercy of God had waited a little longer, his deserved *wrath came upon them to the uttermost.* (1 Thess. ii. 16.)

29 Most *unrighteous* was it in the *Roman officer*, on this popular clamour, to attempt *putting* this best of men *to the torture;* Most *reasonable was Paul's plea*, as a *Roman citizen* to decline that suffering. It is *a prudence* worthy of being imitated by the bravest of men, not to throw themselves into *unnecessary difficulties.*

Nor

Nor are we under any obligation as Christians to give up *our civil privileges*, which we are to esteem as *the gifts of God*, to every insolent and turbulent invader: In a thousand circumstances, gratitude to God, and duty to men, will oblige us *to insist upon them*; and a generous concern for those that are to come after us, should engage us to labour and strive that we may transmit them *improved*, rather than *impaired*, to posterity as yet unborn. SECT. L

SECT. LI.

Paul being brought before the Sanhedrim, after having been unjustly smitten by the command of the high-priest, occasions a dissension in the council, on which his sentence is delayed; but a conspiracy being formed against his life, he informs the tribune of it. Acts XXII. 30. XXIII. 1—22.

Acts XXII. 30.

ON the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

Acts XXII. 30.

SECT. LI.

WHEN the Roman officer had rescued Paul from the people, in the manner already described, he lodged him in the castle that night; *and on the morrow, desiring to know* clearly and *certainly of what he was accused by the Jews*, which he could not make out from what had already passed, as he did not understand the Hebrew language, in which Paul had made his apology to them, *he loosed him from his bonds* in which he had laid him a close prisoner, *and commanded the chief priests and all* the other members of *their Sanhedrim to come together* and to hold a court: *And bringing Paul down* from the castle, *he set him before them*, that he might be examined and tried according to the laws and usages of his own country; that so the most seditious of the Jews might have no reason to complain of the manner in which they were treated. Acts XXII. 30.

Acts XXIII. 1. And Paul earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience

And Paul looking attentively on the Sanhedrim, as he stood before it, that he might observe whether he could recollect the faces of any whom he had formerly known in that court, *said, Men and brethren*, though I am brought before you as a malefactor, to be examined and judged by you, I have the secret pleasure of being conscious to myself, that none can justly advance any charge against me; but whatsoever be objected to me, I appeal unto the searcher of all hearts, that *I have even to this day*, though it Acts XXIII. 1

is

SECT. li.

Acts XXIII.

is so long since I have declared myself a Christian, *conversed before God in all good conscience*[a], and lived in the faithful discharge of my duty to him, and to my fellow-creatures.

conscience before God, until this day.

2 *But Ananias the high priest*[b], who knowing in his own heart his inveterate enmity to Paul, and the steps he had openly taken for his destruction, thought himself insulted by such a solemn declaration of his innocence, *commanded those that stood by him* at the bar *to smite him on the mouth*, for what he represented as so insolent an assertion; which was accordingly done.

2 And the high-priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him, to smite him on the mouth.

3 *Then Paul*, animated on a sudden by the secret impulse of a prophetic spirit, which bore him, as it were, for that moment beyond himself, *said to him, God is about to smite thee* in a very awful manner, *O thou whited wall*[c]! thou false painted hypocrite! *For sittest thou* on the tribunal

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten

a *I have even to this day conversed before God in all good conscience.*] Paul could not intend by this to intimate, that he thought himself *free from guilt* while *persecuting the Christians*, since he so expressly declares the contrary elsewhere. (See 1 Tim. i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 9; Gal. i. 13.) He was only examined with respect to his conduct *as a Christian*, and therefore it would not have been pertinent here to have referred to his conduct while *a persecuting Jew*, though it were indeed true, that he did not *then* act *against his conscience*, how criminal soever he was in suffering it to continue *misinformed*. The plain sense of this passage is, that *his conscience*, when examined as in the sight of God, with respect to what they alledged against him, *did not charge him* with any known and deliberate contradictions to its dictates; and so it was, in effect, a solemn and very pertinent *appeal* to the searcher of all hearts, that he had not devoted himself to the service of *the gospel*, in which he was now engaged, from any mean and dishonourable principle, but was fully convinced of the truth of it, and therefore prepared to abide all extremities in its defence. Well might there be in such a case a natural *salij of joy*, arising in an upright heart from a consciousness of *its own integrity*, amidst such violent calumnies as were now advanced against him.

b *Ananias the high-priest.*] Dr. Benson, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 221,) Mr. Biscoe, (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 8, p. 70—76,) and several others, have justly observed from Josephus, (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 5, [al. 3,] § 2, 3; & *cap.* 6, [al. 5,] § 2,) that this was Ananias the son of Nebedæus, who by his station was *head of the Sanhedrim*. He had formerly been sent prisoner to Rome, to give an account to Claudius Cæsar of his behaviour, in the quarrel which happened between the Jews and Samaritans during the government of Cumanus in Judea, but was acquitted, probably by the intercession of *Agrippa the younger*. The difficulties which have been urged from Josephus, against his being *high-priest now*, are answered by Mr. Biscoe in a very learned and judicious manner.

c *God is about to smite thee, O thou whited wall!*] Alluding to the beautiful outside of some *walls*, which are full of dirt and rubbish within. The account Josephus gives of the character and fate of this wretch abundantly illustrates this speech of Paul. He might well be called *a whited wall*, not only as he committed this *indecency* while gravely sitting in a sacred character on the tribunal of justice, but also as, at the same time that he carried it very plausibly towards the citizens, and stood high in their favour, he most impiously and cruelly *defrauded the inferior priests* of the subsistence which the divine law assigned them, so that some of them even perished for want, (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 9, [al. 8,] § 2.) And *God did* remarkably *smite him*, as, after his own house had been reduced to ashes in a tumult begun by his own son, he was besieged and taken in the royal palace, where, having in vain attempted to hide himself in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out and slain; (*Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 17, [al. 18,] § 2, 6, 9;) an event, which happened about *five years* after this, in the very beginning of the *Jewish war*.

d *In*

smitten contrary to the law?

nal of justice, pretending *to judge me according to the law* of God, *and yet in a* presumptuous *violation of the law commandest me to be smitten*[d], though convicted of no crime and guilty of no indecent behaviour? The supreme Judge will not suffer thee finally to escape, but will ere long animadvert upon thee in righteous vengeance for this violence.

SECT. li.

Acts XXIII. 3

4 And they that stood by, said, Revilest thou God's high-priest?

But they that stood by were greatly offended, and *said*, *Dost thou*, who pretendest to so much religion, presume impiously to *revile the high-priest of God*, the most sacred person in our nation, and consequently in the whole world?

4

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

And upon this, *Paul*, unwilling to enter upon a question so difficult to be cleared up, as the divine original of that impulse on his mind, by which he found himself inclined to utter those remarkable words, only touched upon a circumstance attending it, which was of a more ambiguous nature, and *said*, Indeed, *brethren*, in the sudden transport of my mind *I was not aware that it was the high-priest*[e], otherwise I should have been cautious how I had taken such a liberty; *for* I know that *it is written* in the word of God, (Exod. xxii. 28,) which I desire at all times, and under the greatest provocations, to make my rule, "*Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people;*" and I should be sorry that any should take encouragement from what I then said, to fail in paying due respect to magistrates, whatever their personal character may be.

5

But

d *In violation of the law commandest me to be smitten.*] God in his law forbad *all violence in judgment*, (Lev. xix. 15) Yet we find repeated insults of this very kind, indecent as they always are, offered to the *prophets*, (1 Kings xxii. 24. Jer. xx. 2.) and even to Christ himself. (John xviii. 22.)

e *I was not aware that it was the high-priest.*] This is a natural rendering of the words οκ ηδειν οτι ην αρχιερευς, which cannot fairly be translated, *I do not acknowledge him to be the high-priest*; nor can it be imagined, that Paul would enter on so curious and so dangerous a question, as *the justice of his accession* to that office. Some have thought, *he did not know him* personally; but his habit and place in the *Sanhedrim*, might distinguish him: or if we were to suppose with Rivetus, that Paul, hearing the voice while looking another way, *did not know from whence it came*, the solution is utterly insufficient; for Paul's answer plainly shews, he knew *the person speaking*, whoever he were, to be *a judge*. It seems therefore much more convenient to follow the explication of this matter given in the *paraphrase*, which will easily reconcile all that passed, with *Christ's promise* of *being with his apostles* when appearing *before councils*: (Mat. x. 19. Mark xiii. 11.) for according to us, Paul by inspiration uttered *a true prediction*, and then alledged *a true fact* to prevent any ill use of the circumstance in which it was spoken; only waving something, which he might justly have urged in his own vindication, and from which he had undoubted right to recede, if he thought fit. In the mean time, the candour both of *the historian* and of *the apostle* is well worthy our remark.

SECT. li.

Acts XXIII. 6

But Paul perceiving, as he looked about him *that the one part* of the court *were Sadducees*[f], *and the other Pharisees, cried out in the Sanhedrim, Men and brethren, I* was by my education, and still *am* in my judgment, *a Pharisee*, as I was also *the son of a Pharisee;* nor is there any one more zealous for the great fundamental doctrine of that celebrated sect: And I am well satisfied, that if the whole secret of my prosecution were fairly and thoroughly laid open from its first principles, it would be found that it is *for the hope* I have of a future state, *and* the zeal with which I teach the *resurrection of the dead*, that *I am* now *brought into judgment*[g]; nor would some of my greatest enemies have expressed such indignation against me, had not the whole tenor of my public teaching so evidently tended to confirm a doctrine against which they are so violently prejudiced.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 *And on his speaking this*, the council fell to disputing, and *there was* presently *a contention* on this head *between the Pharisees and the Sadducees*, several persons of each sect appearing warm in the debate: *And the multitude was* greatly *divided: For* it is well known that *the Sadducees say, there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor* separate *spirit; but the Pharisees* not only *confess both*, but contend earnestly for the certainty of the resurrection, and the real existence of angels and other spirits.

7 And when he had so said, there, arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

9 *And* upon this *there was a great clamour* in the assembly; *and the scribes* [*who were*] *on the side of the Pharisees arose and contended, saying, We find no evil in this man*, and can perceive no reason for his being condemned or detained; *but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him*, in the manner he represents, let us acquiesce, and wait the event; and as Gamaliel formerly expressed it among us, in an argument which then was judged by the Sanhedrim worthy of its regard

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

f *Part were Sadducees.*] Josephus assures us, that many of *this sect* were in places of *high dignity* among the Jews. See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 10, [al. 18,] § 6. & *lib.* xviii. *cap.* 1, [al. 2,] § 4.

g *For the hope and resurrection of the dead, &c.*] Orobio charges this upon Paul, as an artful manner of *declining persecution*, unworthy the character of an upright and generous man. (*Limborch. Collat. cum Jud.* p. 134, 165.) But there is no just reason for the charge, since this was *a part*, though not *the whole* of the truth; as the chief thing, which enraged *the Sadducees* against Christianity, was the demonstration which it gave to the doctrine of *a resurrection*, which they so eagerly opposed. See Acts iv. 2, with the *paraphrase*, Vol. VII. p. 537 and chap. v. 17, ibid. p. 555.

h *Let*

SECT. li.

gard, *let us not fight against God*, which must end in our ruin[h]. (Compare Acts v. 39.)

Acts XXIII.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

10 *And as a great disturbance arose*, some of them urging that he should be set at liberty, while others eagerly insisted on his condemnation, *the Tribune* was informed of their disorderly proceedings; and *fearing lest* amidst the tumult *Paul should be torn in pieces by them*, he *commanded* a party of *the* Roman *soldiers to go down, and take him by force from the midst of them, and* so *to bring him* up again *into the castle* of Antonia, from whence he had been led.

11 And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

11 *And* after they had lodged him there, it came to pass, that *in the following night the Lord* Jesus Christ appeared to Paul in a vision, and *standing by him said*,[i] *Be of good courage, Paul; for as thou hast testified the things concerning me at Jerusalem*, and all the malice of the Jews has not prevented thee from faithfully discharging thy commission *so thou must also bear* thy *testimony* to me and my doctrine *at Rome*; and notwithstanding all the difficulties thou hast now before thee, I will support thee to go through the trial, and turn it abundantly to mine own glory, and to thy consolation.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

12 *And when it was day, some of the* bigotted *Jews*, who were exceedingly provoked that Paul had thus been rescued from the council, resolved that they would be the means of his destruction, and *entering into a conspiracy, bound themselves with a* solemn *curse, saying, That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.*

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

13 *And* though it was so black and horrid a design, yet *they were more than forty* of them *who had made this* rash and barbarous *agreement.*

14 And they came to

14 *And* having fixed upon a scheme for putting it in execution, *they came* without reserve

[h] *Let us not fight against God.*] When they mentioned it as a supposable case, that *an angel might have spoken to him*, they might probably allude to the many *visions* and *revelations*, which Paul had professed to have received in his *late speech* to the people, as Dr. Benson observes, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 224. The reader will perceive here a remarkable resemblance to the speech of Gamaliel, referred to in the *paraphrase;* but it appears from Dr. Prideaux, (*Connect.* Vol. II. p. 529,) that this happened *after the death* of that celebrated *rabbi.*

[i] *The Lord standing by him said*, &c.] This plainly shews, that *our Lord approved* the part Paul had acted before the Sanhedrim, though some have censured it, without understanding or considering the circumstances of it. The pious as well as learned professor Witsius well observes, that it must be *a greater consolation* to so faithful a *soldier of Christ* as Paul was, having been thus approved and encouraged by *his general*, to be led on to *farther combats*, than to be immediately dismissed. And such a temper he expresses, Phil. i. 20—26.

[k] *We*

SECT. li.

Acts XXIII.

serve *to the chief priests, and* to those of *the elders*, whom they knew to be his enemies; *and said*, We are so transported with zeal at the outrage that has been done to our sacred law,
14 that *we have* one and all *bound ourselves by a solemn anathema*[k], *not to taste any thing* of food *till we have slain* this *Paul;* whom we look upon as so notorious an enemy to God and his country, that if the course of public justice against him be obstructed, it will no doubt be a meritorious action, which you will certainly approve, as what must be pleasing to God himself, to take him off by such a method as this:
15 *Now therefore, do you, with the* other members of the *Sanhedrim, signify* it as your request *to the Tribune, that he* would *bring him down* from the castle *to you to-morrow, as if you would more accurately* examine and *discuss what relates to him: and we are ready* at all adventures, even at the hazard of our lives, *to kill him before he can come near you:* And we will manage the attack in such a manner that you shall not appear at all concerned in it, nor have any alarm about the matter, till you hear that he is actually dead.
16 *But* how privately soever this matter was conducted, the providence of God so ordered it, for the deliverance of his faithful servant from this inhuman and bloody conspiracy, that *Paul's sister's son, hearing of the ambush, came, and entering into the castle* of Antonia, where (as we observed before) he now lay confined, *told Paul*
17 the whole story. *And Paul calling one of the centurions to him*[l], who commanded part of the cohort

to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council, signify to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though you would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one

k *We have bound ourselves by a solemn anathema.*] This seems a proper rendering of the very emphatical form in the *original.* Αναθεματι αναθεματισαμεν εαυτους, Such execrable vows as these were not unusual with the Jews, who challenged to themselves *a right* of punishing those, without any legal process, whom they considered as transgressors of the law, and in some cases thought that they were justified in killing them. Josephus mentions a case, not much unlike to this, of some that *bound themselves with an oath to kill Herod,* in which they gloried as a laudable intention, because he had violated the ancient customs of their nation. (*Antiq. lib.* xv. *cap.* 8, [al. 11,] § 3, 4.] It is no wonder therefore, that *these Jews,* should make no scruple of acquainting *the chief priests and elders,* with their conspiracy against the life of Paul, who were so far from blaming them for it, that not long after they renewed the same design themselves. (Acts xxv. 2, 3.) See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Book I. chap. 9, § 9. Vol. I. p. 474—483, and *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 5, p. 278—281.——Dr. Lightfoot has shewn from the *Talmud, (Hor. Hebr. in loc.)* that, if they were prevented from accomplishing such vows as these, it was an easy matter to obtain an *absolution* from their *rabbies.*

l *Paul calling one of the centurions to him.*] Though Paul had an express promise from Christ for his security, ver. 11. yet he did not neglect any proper means of safety. Compare Acts xxvii. 24, 25, 31.

m *Taking*

SECT. li.

Acts XXIII.

one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldst bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

cohort under the Tribune, presented his kinsman to him, and *said*, I desire thou wouldest *conduct this young man to the Tribune, for he hath something* of importance *to tell him. He therefore took and led him to the Tribune, and* having introduced him, *said, Paul the prisoner calling me to him, desired that I would bring this young man to thee, who has something* of considerable importance *to tell thee*, though what it is I do not at all know. *And the Tribune* in a very obliging and condescending manner *taking him by the hand, and leading him into a retired place*, where none might over-hear them [m], *inquired* [*of him*,] saying, *What is it that thou hast to tell me?* speak freely, for I shall give thee an attentive hearing. *And he said* to the Tribune, I have received certain intelligence, that *the Jews have agreed together to ask thee, that thou wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow to the Sanhedrim, as if they would enquire something more accurately concerning him: But* if thou hast any regard for the life of so innocent and worthy a man, *do not be prevailed upon by them*, to order him to be so brought down; *for there are more than forty of them lie in an ambush for him, who have obliged themselves by a curse neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him, and they are now ready*, with their weapons as it were in their hands, to execute this their murderous purpose, *waiting* only *an order from thee* to bring him by the place where they are posting themselves, in expectation it will prove the signal for his death.

The Tribune therefore hearing this *dismissed the young man, with a charge*, saying, [*Be sure thou*] *tell no man that thou hast discovered these things to me*, and depend upon it that I will bear in mind what thou hast told me, and do what is proper upon the occasion. And accordingly he took immediate measures for Paul's security from this intended assassination, of which a particular account will hereafter be given.

IMPROVE-

17 18 19 20 21 22

m *Taking him by the hand*, &c.] It is observable, that Lysias seems to have conducted this whole affair, like a man of great integrity and prudence.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. li. NEXT to the history of *the great Captain of our salvation*, as recorded by the holy evangelists, none of *the Christian heroes*

Ver. 1 of whom we read makes a brighter figure than Paul; nor is there any who seems *a spectacle more worthy the view of angels*, or of God himself: Nobly supported in the midst of persecutions and indignities, by the testimony of his conscience as to the integrity with which he had *walked before God*, and therefore assured of the divine aid, he appears superior to all human injuries. Most

2 unrighteously did *the high-priest command* that *mouth* to be *smitten* which had spoken *the words of truth and soberness*. Most justly

3 did God verify the prediction of his faithful, though despised servant, and *smite that whited wall* with speedy destruction which had stood in such a haughty opposition to his gospel.

4, 5 Paul might have urged a great deal in defence of what he had said, and yet he chose prudently to decline that defence; and seems much more solicitous to prevent the abuse of what might appear dubious, than to assert his own cause to the utmost that it would bear. Thus should we sometimes be ready, as the Psalmist beautifully expresses it, *to restore what we took not away*, (Psal. lxix. 4.) and for the peace of society, and the edification of others, should be content to wave apologies which we might justly offer. Let us learn particularly to *revere that authority* with which God hath clothed magistrates; and be very cautious how we *speak evil of the rulers of our people*. Let the ministers of the gospel especially be cautious of it, lest the ministry be upon that account *blamed*, and their own character exposed, as if they were *trumpeters of sedition*, rather than *ambassadors* of the *Prince of peace*.

6, 7, 8 Our Lord had given it in charge to his apostles that they should *be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves;* Mat. x. 16,) both these characters are joined in Paul's behaviour on this important occasion: It was no dishonest artifice to divide the counsel, and to engage the favour of *the Pharisees*, by reminding them of what, if they considered the circumstances of the case, must needs appear to them to be truth; that it was his zeal for the doctrine of *the resurrection* that brought upon him a great deal of that *opposition* which he was then encountering, and that the most convincing evidence of that doctrine depended on the facts which, as *an apostle of Jesus*, he publicly maintained. And it had been most

9 happy for *the Pharisees* had they always borne in their own minds the caution they now gave the *Sadducees*, to *take heed of fighting against God*. May none of us *provoke the Lord to jealousy, as if we were stronger than he*, which we shall certainly do by rejecting the tidings

tidings he hath sent us by his apostles, and the life and immortality which he promises in his gospel. SECT. LII.

Graciously did Providence provide for the rescue and deliverance of Paul from *the tumult* then excited, and *the conspiracy* afterwards formed: Who would not lament to see *a design of murder* avowed with impunity before the *chief magistrates* of the Jewish nation, and approved by them under a pretence of *religious zeal*, while it was consecrated to God by the solemnity of *a vow*? *The time* was indeed *come, when they that killed the servants of Christ thought they did God* good *service*, (John xvi. 2;) as if *no libation* or offering could have been so pleasing to him as *the blood of his saints*: But *names* alter not the *nature* of things; God regarded their councils with righteous abhorrence, and he *laughed them to scorn*. In vain did they form and approve *a conspiracy* which heaven had determined to defeat; *their lying in wait* was, we know not how, *discovered to a youth*, and by means of *that youth*, who might perhaps have seemed *beneath their notice*, God as effectually *preserved Paul*, as if he had sent *an angel from heaven* to deliver him, and turned the cabals of *these bigots* that thirsted for his blood into perplexity and shame. So, *Lord* do thou continue to *carry the council of the froward headlong*, (Job. v. 13,) and save from the hand of violence and fraud all who *commit themselves* unto thee *in well-doing*, and humbly confide in thy wisdom and goodness. 10, 12 14, 15 16—22

SECT. LII.

Paul, for the preservation of his life from the conspiracy of the Jews, is sent by night from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, where he is presented to Felix, and quickly after is accused by Tertullus in the name of the Sanhedrim. Acts XXIII. 23, *to the end.* XXIV. 1—9.

Acts XXIII. 23.

AND he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night.

Acts XXIII. 23.

IN the last section it was shewn, how the conspiracy which the Jews had formed against Paul's life had been discovered to the Roman Tribune: Now as this officer was a very equitable and worthy person, he was determined to consult the safety of his prisoner, whose innocence he was the more convinced of, from such base methods taken to destroy him; *and* finding it necessary for this purpose to remove him from Jerusalem, *he called to him two of the centurions* in whom he could particularly confide, *and said* to them, *Prepare* immediately the *two hundred soldiers* under your command, that they may be ready SECT. LIII. Acts XXIII. 23

SECT. liii.

Acts XXIII.

ready *to go* directly *to Cæsarea; and* take with them a further guard of *seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen,* and let them begin their march *by the third hour of the night;* (that is, at
24 nine in the evening;) *And provide beasts, to set Paul upon,* if a change should be necessary, *and* see that you *conduct him in safety,* and with all convenient expedition, *to Felix, the governor* of the province.

24 And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

25 *And he* also *wrote an epistle* to Felix on this occasion, *the contents of which are* expressed *in*
26 *this copy,* " *Claudius Lysias,* the commander of a body of Roman soldiers at Jerusalem, *to his excellency Felix, the governor* of this province, [*sendeth*] *greeting* with the sincerest
27 wishes of health and prosperity. This comes to inform you, that *as this man,* who is called Paul, *was seized by* a multitude of *the Jews,* who made a sudden insurrection on his account, *and had like to have been slain by them, I came upon them with a party of soldiers, and rescued him* from their furious assault: *And* I am the better pleased I had an opportunity of doing it, as *I have* since *learnt that he is a Roman* ci-
28 tizen[a]: *And desiring* so much the more on this account *to know* particularly what was *the crime of which they accused him, I brought him before the Sanhedrim;* imagining that was the most proper tribunal to discuss a cause of such a nature, as from general circumstances, I appre-
29 hend this must be. *And* after they had examined him, *I found he was accused* of no great crime, and that a cry was raised against him, only *concerning* some nice *questions of their law; but that nothing was charged upon him,* of which, if there had been sufficient proof to have convicted him, he would have been *worthy*

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent governor Felix, *sendeth* greeting.

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council.

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death, or of bonds.

[a] *And I have* since *learnt that he is a Roman.*] As it appears from the preceding story, that, when Lysias first rescued Paul out of the hands of the populace, he did not so much as imagine him to be a Roman, it is plain, that μαθων here (as Grotius well observes,) is put for και μαθον, according to the turn given in the *paraphrase*; and consequently, no shadow of an argument can be drawn from hence to prove, that the Jews had then *a power* of putting those of their countrymen to death, who were *not Roman citizens,* as Dr. Lardner has well argued in his large, and I think very conclusive, examination of this question. *(Credib.* Book I. chap. 2. See especially § 10. Vol. I. p. 144—146.) Beza thinks, Lysias represents the fact a little unfairly, and would have made Felix believe, that he knew Paul was a Roman before he rescued him; but his conduct appears in the main so honourable, that I rather think, he only means in the general to intimate, that he had on the whole been more solicitous to provide for Paul's security, out of regard to his being *a Roman citizen.*

b *Brought*

thy of death, or even *of bonds:* Nevertheless I chose to keep him confined for a few days, that I might not too much exasperate the people by dismissing him immediately. *But when* during this time *it was signified to me, that an ambush would be laid by the Jews for the* unfortunate *man,* with an intention to assassinate him; and with this view a scheme was formed to have him brought down from the castle to the Sanhedrim, on a pretence of farther examination, that they might kill him by the way; *I* thought it my duty *immediately* to provide for the security of his life, and therefore have *sent* [*him*] under a guard *to thee, commanding his accusers also,* who by these unwarrantable measures have rendered themselves much suspected, *to* come and *declare before thee what they have* to alledge *against him.* And so, with all due respect, I bid thee most heartily *farewell.*"

30 And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what *they had* against him, Farewel.

30

The soldiers therefore, as it was commanded them, taking up Paul, and mounting him according to the kind provision which Lysias had made, *brought him by night*-marches through Nicopolis and Lydda *to Antipatris*[b], a city within the borders of the tribe of Manasseh, which lay not far from the Mediterranean sea, about thirty-eight miles distant from Jerusalem. *And the next day* after their arrival at that city, as *they* concluded he was now pretty secure from danger, the two companies of foot *returned* with the spearmen *to the castle* at Jerusalem, *leaving the* seventy *horsemen to go with him* to the end of his journey; *Who* accordingly guarded him the rest of the way, and *entering* with him *into Cæsarea,* which was about thirty miles from Anti-

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

31

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle.

32

33 Who when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the

33

b *Brought him by night to Antipatris.*] Very different accounts are given of the situation of Antipatris, which must however have been *north-west of Jerusalem,* as it was in the way from thence to Cæsarea. Its ancient name was *Capharsalama,* (1 Macc. vii. 31; and *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xii. *cap.* 10, [al. 17,] § 4,) or *Chabarzaba; (Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 15, [al. 23.] § 1;) but *Herod the Great* rebuilt it, and gave it the name of Antipatris, in honour of his father Antipater. *(Joseph Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 21, [al. 16,] § 9; & *Antiq. lib.* xvi. *cap.* 5, [al. 9,] § 2.) Some have supposed, it was but *eighteen* or *twenty miles* from Jerusalem; but Mr. Biscoe (whose account is followed in the *paraphrase,*) has shewn, it was something more than *thirty-eight* of our *miles,* which must have been too far for one *night's march;* he therefore very well observes, it is not necessary to conclude, that Paul was carried thither *in one night,* or that the soldiers returned *in one day.* It is only said, that they travelled *by night,* which they might do, and rest by the way; nor is it probable, they took Paul with them from Jerusalem *at night* and reached Cæsarea *the next day,* when it appears from Josephus, that from Jerusalem to Cæsarea was *six hundred furlongs,* or near *seventy miles. (Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 3, § 5; & *Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 11, [al. 12,] § 2.) See *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect,* chap. 10, p. 388—391.

c *Herod's*

SECT. lii.

Antipatris, acquitted themselves of their trust; *and delivering the epistle* they had brought from the governor, presented Paul also before him.

XXIII. Lysias *to* Felix *the governor*, they *presented Paul*
33 *also before him*, and so completed the affair with which they had been charged.

34 *And when the governor had read* [*the letter*,] and understood that Paul was sent as one accused of the Jews, that he should try his cause, *he*
35 presently *asked of what province he was: And being informed that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thee, said he*, and thoroughly examine into this matter, *when thine accusers are also come*; which I suppose will be in a few days. *And* in the mean time *he commanded him to be kept* bound *in Herod's prætorium* [c], where a body of soldiers was quartered, under whose guard prisoners were often detained.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall.

Acts XXIV. 1 *And* according to the expectation of Felix, it was not long before he had occasion to call for Paul again; for *after* he had been but *five days* at Cæsarea, *the high-priest Ananias*, apprehending the matter to be of the utmost importance, *came down* in person, *with* several of *the elders*, who were members of the Sanhedrim; *and* they brought along with them *a certain orator* [*called*] *Tertullus*, whose business it was to open the cause, and to harangue the governor in the most agreeable manner that he could: *And they* all *made their appearance* in form *before the governor*, and advanced a general accusation *against Paul* on which they desired to be more
2 particularly heard. *And he being called* to hear his charge, and make his defence, *Tertullus began to accuse him* [d], *saying*, with more regard to interest than truth,

Acts XXIV. 1. And after five days, Ananias the high-priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying—

May it please your excellency, *as we enjoy great peace by your means* [e], *and* many *illustrious deeds*,

—Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very

[c] *Herod's prætorium.*] This was *a palace* and court, built by *Herod the Great*, when he rebuilt and beautified Cæsarea. Probably, some *tower* belonging to it might be used as a kind of *state-prison*, as is common in such places.

[d] *Tertullus began to accuse him.*] Almost every word of this oration *is false*; the accusation of Paul, the encomium of the government of Felix, and the declaration of *a lawful intention* in what they had done and attempted.

[e] *We enjoy great peace by your means.*] He probably refers to what Felix had done to clear the country of *robbers* and *impostors*: for all *historians* agree, that he was a man of *so bad a character*, that his government was *a plague* to all the provinces over which he presided; and as for Judea, its state under Felix was so far from being what Tertullus here represents, that Josephus (besides what he says of the barbarous and cowardly *assassination* of *Jonathan the high-priest* by his means,) declares, that the Jews accused him before Nero of insufferable oppressions, and had certainly ruined him, if his brother Pallas had not interposed in his favour. (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8. [al. 6, 7,] § 5, 7, 9.) See also *Tacit. Histor. lib.* v. § 9, & *Annal. lib.* xii. § 54.

[f] *Illus-*

very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

deeds are happily done to this whole Jewish *nation*[f], and many disorders rectified, *by* the continual care and vigilance of *your prudent administration; We accept* [*it*] *always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all* imaginable *thankfulness*, and it grieves us to be under this unfortunate necessity of troubling you with our complaints, though we are well assured of your generous disposition to remedy them. *Nevertheless*, it is impossible that the wisest governors should prevent some troubles arising to the State under their care, while so much sedition and wickedness remain in those who ought to behave as orderly subjects; and therefore *that I may not trouble you farther* with any laboured introduction, *I* humbly *beseech you to hear us* what we have to offer *in a few words*, according to your well known goodness and humanity, *with your* [*usual*] *candour*, and to bear with me while I briefly open the charge against this notorious offender, whom we are obliged to pursue even to this august tribunal.

3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

For indeed to speak with that plainness which truth and justice require on such an occasion, *we have found this man a* most *pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world; and* to give the compleatest idea of his malignity that a few words can express, he is not only a member, but even *a ringleader of the* detestable *sect of the Nazarenes;* than which none has ever sprung up amongst us more dishonourable to the law of the Jews, or more dangerous to the government of the Romans. It would be easy to alledge many gross instances of his impiety, which they who have known his conduct abroad fail not to testify; but it is needless to insist on any other facts, against a criminal *who has* been so audacious, that but very lately he *attempted also to profane the temple*[g], by bringing uncircumcised persons

6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took,

[f] *Illustrious deeds are happily done*, &c.] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 472, 473,) proves this to be the exact sense of the words καλοῦ: θωμάτων γινομένων, *illustrious undertakings happily accomplished*, and shews the *compliment* was here *the higher*, as it was usual, even at this time, among the Romans, at least in public discourses, to refer such events to *divine Providence*, rather than human efforts, of which he brings many remarkable instances, which shew either the *piety*, or the *policy*, of the great men of antiquity who made use of such language. On the other hand, *apparent slights* put upon *religion* by persons in public stations are proofs of *a weak understanding*, that cannot fail of making them contemptible, not only among all *religious*, but all *prudent* men.

[g] *Has attempted also to profane the temple.*] Tertullus artfully mentions *this*, as the most express fact he had to charge upon him,

SECT. lii.

persons within the sacred boundaries from which they are excluded, even by your authority as well as by our law, on pain of death. As he

Acts XXIV. 6 is one therefore who has rendered himself on such a variety of accounts obnoxious and odious to our whole nation, *and* against *whom* we have so many accusations, *we seized* him a few days ago as a notorious offender, *and would have judged* him *according to our law*, which in such a case as this, it is well known, we had a right to execute in its fullest extent, and might have

7 done it even on the spot. *But Lysias the tribune*, commander of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem, *coming upon us with a great* and armed *force, took him away out of our hands*, and so interrupted the course of our just and regular

8 proceedings against him: Nor had we troubled you with hearing us on this occasion, had not he sent him hither, *commanding his accusers to come to you*, if they intended to prosecute the affair any farther; *by which means you might yourself, on* a proper *examination, take cognizance of all these things of which we accuse him*. We promise ourselves therefore, from the known wisdom, equity, and goodness of your excellency, that as we can all aver the truth of these facts on which we ground our charge, you will please to consider the importance of the case, in which the national honour, safety, and religion are so nearly concerned, and will either punish this notorious criminal as he deserves, or order him back again to Jerusalem, and interpose your authority, which is here supreme, to prevent any farther opposition to the legal proceedings of the Sanhedrim against him.

9 *And* when Tertullus had concluded his smooth and flattering oration, *the Jews also* who were present *gave their assent* to all that he had urged, *saying* to Felix, *that* it was true, that all *these things were so* as he had alledged in his discourse, and

took, and would have judged according to our law.

7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands,

8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee, by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

9 And the Jews also assented saying, that these things were so.

him, as he knew that the Romans allowed the Jews a power of *executing*, even without forms of law *any person* who should be found in such an act of *profanation*, and seems to have intended to make a merit of *their moderation*, that they intended nevertheless *fairly to have tried him*, and not to have *destroyed him on the spot*, as Lysias had justly charged them with attempting to do: And it is observable, that he no where expressly avows so much as *a design* to have *put Paul to death*, though it was undoubtedly intended; so that I cannot but wonder, that *this story* should ever have been urged to prove, that the *Jewish courts* had the power of *executing capital punishments* without a warrant from the Romans. The phrase, which Tertullus afterwards uses of the *accusers* being *commanded to come to Felix*, (ver. 8,) though *the high-priest* himself was known to be one of them, shews plainly to what *subjection* they were reduced.

and that he had truly represented the cause which had now brought them to Cæsarea. SECT. III.

And on this Felix ordered Paul to offer any thing which he had to urge in his own defence, of which, with the issue of the cause, an account will be given in the next section. Acts XXIV. 9

IMPROVEMENT.

To hear the most amiable goodness *injured* by false and virulent accusations, is what we have been accustomed to, in the perusal of this *sacred history*, in which we have now advanced so far. The *surprise of it* therefore is abated. But who would not *lament*, to see the great talent of *eloquence*, in itself so noble, and capable of such excellent use for the public good, *abused* to such infamous purposes, on the one hand to varnish over crimes, and on the other to render innocence suspected, and virtue itself odious! Had that of Tertullus been much greater, than it appears by this specimen, it would only have served to perpetuate *his own shame* to posterity for the mean *flattery* he addressed to Felix, and the cruel and unjust *invectives* which he poured out against Paul. But *history* is juster than *panegyric* or *satyr*, and has left us *the character* of the one, and the other, painted *in its true colours:* And much more evidently shall *every character* appear *in the justest light* before the tribunal of a righteous God, where Paul, and Felix and Tertullus, and Ananias, are to meet again. There may *we*, with the apostle, *have honour and praise*, whatever *eloquence* may now arraign, whatever *authority* may now condemn us! Acts XXIV. 2—9

In the mean time, where *we enjoy great peace* under the magistrates which Providence has set over us, *and worthy deeds are done by them* for the honour of God and the good of mankind, let us *always thankfully accept it*, and take care ourselves to be *quiet in the land*. Should they, who call themselves the followers of Jesus, be indeed *pestilent fellows and movers of sedition*, they would act not only *beneath* their character as Christians, but directly *contrary* to it, and in a manner which must by necessary consequence forfeit it; nor should they affect to be *ringleaders* in *sects* and *parties*. Their master is *the prince of peace:* In his service let them exert themselves, but always *in the spirit of love*, labouring by the *meekness* of their tempers, and the *usefulness* of their lives, *to silence*, and if possible *to shame*, the clamours of their ignorant and malicious enemies. Ver. 2, 3, 5

SECT. LIII.

Paul vindicates himself from the accusation which the Jews by the mouth of Tertullus had advanced against him, in such a manner, that Felix only orders him to be kept under a gentle confinement at Cæsarea. Acts XXIV. 10—23.

Acts XXIV. 10.

SECT. liii.

Acts XXIV. 10

TERTULLUS, and the Jewish priests and elders who were come from Jerusalem to Cæsarea with him, opened their charge against Paul, in the presence of Felix the Roman governor, in the manner which was represented in the former section. *Then Paul* also, *after the governor had made a signal,* by his nodding *to him,* that it was now his time *to speak, answered* the accusation they had brought against him in terms to this purpose:

Knowing that thou, O Felix, *hast been for several years a* president and *judge to this nation*[a], and consequently art not wholly unacquainted with its customs, or with the temper of its rulers and people, *I answer for myself with the*

11 *more cheerfulness* in thy presence[b]: And after all that has been said by my accusers, I have no cause to fear they should impose upon thy judgment by the charges they have brought against me, *as thou mayest* easily *know* by evidence which cannot

Acts XXIV. 10.

THEN Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered,

— Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days

a *Hast been for several years a judge to this nation.*] It might be more exact to render πολλων ἐτων, *many years;* but it seems to be used with some latitude here. Bishop Pearson thinks, it could not have been more than *five years and a half;* but Mr. Biscoe has attempted to prove, (I think very successfully,) that it might now have been *more than seven years* since Felix entered on his government here. This was considerably longer than any of his three predecessors, Fadus, Alexander, or Cumanus, had presided in that province. See *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. ii. § 2, p. 44, 45.

b *I answer for myself,* &c.] Mr. Cradock, in his valuable *Apostolical History,* Part II. p. 288, 289, (which, with his *Harmony,* I cannot but recommend, especially to *young students,* as among the most useful and judicious *expositions* of the *New Testament* I have ever seen,) well observes, how exactly *Paul's answer* corresponds to the three articles of Tertullus' charge, *sedition, heresy,* and *profanation of the temple.*——As to the *first,* he suggests, that he had not been *long enough* at Jerusalem to form *a party,* and attempt *an insurrection,* and challenges them in fact to produce any evidence of such practices. (Ver. 11—13.) As to the *second,* he confesses himself to be *a Christian,* but maintains it to be *a religion* perfectly agreeable to *natural light,* and to the revelation of *the prophets,* and consequently not deserving to be branded with any infamous or invidious title; (ver. 14—16,) and, as for *the profanation of the temple,* he tells them, that on the contrary, he had entered it with some peculiar rites of *religious purification,* and had behaved himself there in a most peaceful and regular manner, so that his innocence had been evident even before the *Sanhedrim,* where the authors of the tumult did not dare to appear against him, (ver. 17—21.)

c *After*

days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

cannot be disputed, *that it is no more than twelve days ago*, the greatest part of which I have been confined, *since I went up to worship at Jerusalem*, and publicly to pay my homage there to God, on my return from a long journey I had taken into distant parts: *And* so far was I from attempting to excite sedition, that I aver it to the face of these mine adversaries, and defy any one to prove the contrary, that *they neither found me* so much as *disputing with any man in the temple, nor making* any where *an insurrection* or any manner of disturbance *among the people, either* there, or *in the synagogues, or* in any other place *in the city* of Jerusalem. *Nor can they*, notwithstanding all their positive assertions, *produce any* fair and sufficient *proof* of this, or any other *of the things concerning which they now accuse me*, though I am charged with so much confidence as a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition.

sect. liii.

Acts XXIV. 11

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

12

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

13

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets:

But as to what they have alledged against me with regard to the sect of the Nazarenes, *this I confess unto thee*, and am not ashamed publicly to avow it in the presence of the greatest personages upon earth, *that after the way which they call* a sect or *heresy* [c], *so do I worship the God of my fathers* [d], even according to the rules and precepts which Christ my great master has given; which is far from being heresy in any infamous sense of the word, since it is most consistent with firmly *believing all things which are written*, both *in the law and in the prophets*, and is indeed most evidently built on those sacred oracles, when rightly understood and explained. And while I act on this maxim, I rejoice in the midst of all the tribulations which can befall me, *having* a cheerful and assured *hope*

14

15 And have hope towards God, which they

15

c *After the way which they call heresy.*] I cannot but think this a place, where the word αιρεσις, which I own to be *often indifferent*, is used in *a bad sense*: for Paul plainly intimates, that Christianity did not deserve the name they gave it: Yet, while it was not the national religion, but its professors were distinguished from most of their countrymen by their adherence to Christ, as the leader they chose to follow, they might properly be called *a sect* or *a party of men*, unless the very word *sect*, or *party* be taken always in *a bad signification* which none well acquainted with the Greek language can imagine.

d *The God of my fathers.*] It has been justly observed, that this was a *very proper plea* before a Roman magistrate, as it proved, that he was under the protection of the Roman laws, since the Jews were so; whereas, had he introduced the worship of *new gods*, he had forfeited that protection: And Elsner has shewn, that a regard to *paternal deities* was held honourable among the Greeks and Romans. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 473—475.

c *And*

SECT. liii.

Acts XXIV.

hope towards God [*of that*] great event *which they themselves also* profess to *expect*, even *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust*, when every

they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

15 man's true character shall be laid open, and he shall receive according to what he has done.

16 *And upon this account*, in the firm expectation and the hope I have of this [e], *I* daily *exercise myself*, and make it the continual care and study of my life, *to have always an inoffensive conscience*, both *towards God and towards men*; that so, whatever accusations are brought against me, my own heart may not condemn me as long as I live, but I may always find a support within, amidst all the injuries I may meet with in a mistaken and unkind world.

16 And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

17 They have represented me indeed as a profane and lawless person, as if I had thrown contempt upon religion, and done them a great deal of wrong; but so far have I been from doing any thing to injure or expose the Jews, to whom by birth I belong, or from attempting to profane the temple, as these my enemies falsely pretend, that I have given many public and important proofs of my particular regard for the good of my country, and of the veneration that I have for all that is sacred. Accordingly *now after several years*, which I had spent in other parts, *I came* to Jerusalem, *to bring alms to* the poor of *my nation*, which I had been collecting for them in the Gentile provinces where I had any interest; *and* went, as one that had a vow, to have made the *offerings* which the law requires: (Compare chap. xxi. 26.)

17 Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 *Upon which*, at the very time when I was thus employed, *some Asiatic Jews*, who raised the first outcry against me, *found me purified in the temple*, which it is manifest I had a right to enter as a Jew, and where I attended *neither with* any *multitude* about me, *nor with* any design of raising a *tumult*, as they have took upon them to insinuate, but behaving myself with that composure and reverence which became the act of solemn devotion in which I was engaged.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult:

19 Those very persons therefore *who* began the commotion,

19 Who ought to have

[e] *And upon this account*, &c.] I am sensible the phrase ἐν τούτῳ, which literally signifies in this, is ambiguous, and may refer to what goes before, or to what follows: but, as in the latter construction it seems almost *an expletive*, and has great weight and spirit in the former, I choose with Grotius to explain it as referring to *his hope of a resurrection*. That ἐν τούτῳ sometimes signifies *on this account* is shewn by Raphelius, *Annot ex Xen.* p. 185.

[f] *After*

have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me:

commotion, and by their falsely charging me with bringing Greeks into the temple, raised such a flame among the people, that I was in immediate danger of my life, if Lysias had not come and taken me away, *ought* now *to have been present before thee, and* should have come *to accuse* [*me*] face to face, *if they had any thing* material to alledge *against me*: But it may justly be concluded, that the prosecutors in their own conscience know my innocence, and therefore they have not thought fit to produce them, nor even to single out any one fact to be legally proved by the deposition of proper witnesses; but would rest the matter on general invectives and uncertain report, as thou must thyself have observed. *Or* if it be otherwise, *let these themselves* who are here present *say*, though they are my most inveterate enemies, *if when I stood before the Sanhedrim they found any crime in me: Unless it be* their pleasure to accuse me *with relation to this one word, which I cried out when I stood among them, That* it is surely *for* the zeal with which I appear in defence of the great doctrine of *the resurrection of the dead, I am judged by you this day*, (chap. xxiii. 6.) A word, to the truth of which I am persuaded their consciences must bear witness, whatever other cause of persecution or complaint they may artfully pretend.

19

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evildoing in me, while I stood before the council:

20

21 Except it be for this one voice; that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

21

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

And when Felix heard these things, and perceived how little they made out in their accusation against Paul, *he put them off* without bringing the matter to a decision, *saying, After I have been more accurately informed concerning* [*this*] *way* or form of religion which Paul teaches [f], and have enquired more particularly into its principles and tendency *when Lysias*

22

[f] *After I have been more accurately informed concerning this way.*] The words in the original are very ambiguous, and might be rendered, That Felix when he had heard these things, *having been more accurately informed concerning this way* of Christianity, and knowing it not to be so mischievous a thing as these accusers suggested, *put them off.*" But I rather think with Beza, Grotius, and others, that they are all *the words of Felix*, and take the meaning to be, "That he would take an opportunity of being more particularly informed of *this sect*, and of its aspect on the public tranquility, and, when Lysias should come, and give him an account of what he had observed concerning it, as well as of the circumstances attending Paul's apprehension, &c. he would determine the affair." Which answer was the more proper, as Paul did not deny, that he was indeed *a leading person among the Christians*, which made a part of their accusation; and we soon after find, that *Felix sent for Paul* to give him an account of his religion, ver. 24. and endeavoured by this, as well as other means, to inform himself in it.

SECT. liii.

Acts XXIV.

Lysias the Tribune comes down to Cæsarea, and gives me an account of what he knows as to the facts in question, *I will take* farther *cognizance of the affair between you*, and will be ready
22 to hear any witnesses, on one hand, or the other which either party may think proper to produce, that I may finally determine it.
23 *And* in the mean time, dismissing the assembly, *he commanded the centurion*, to whom he had before been committed, *to keep Paul* as a prisoner at large, *and let him have* all *the liberty* consistent with securing him, *and to hinder none of his friends from assisting* [*him*] *or coming to him* [g]: thereby plainly shewing, that he was convinced, it was merely a malicious prosecution, and that he was a person no way dangerous to the public.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister, or come unto him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10 We here behold the *righteous* as *bold as a lion*, under false accusations most confidently advanced by persons of the highest rank, and the most sacred, though by a strange contrast) at the same time the most detestable character: And the more Felix was *exercised in affairs*, the more easily might he discern the genuine traces of innocence and integrity in his whole defence, to which, plain as it was, he seems to have paid *more regard*, than to all the complimental and insinuating harangue of Tertullus; so great is the native force of *truth*, even on minds not entirely free from some corrupt bias!

14 Justly did Paul dare to avow his serving God according to the purity of *gospel-institutions*, by whomsoever it might be called *heresy*; nor need any fear *that charge* who make scripture the standard of their faith, and in the sincerity of their hearts seek *inward divine teachings*, that they may understand the sense of it:
15 taking care *not to run before their guide*, and, with this injured *servant of Christ*, making it their *daily exercise to maintain*, in the whole of their conversation, *a conscience void of offence towards God and men*: A noble, though in some instances an arduous exercise;

g *To hinder none of his friends from assisting him.*] This was a circumstance graciously ordered by divine Providence, which would make *Paul's confinement much lighter* than it could otherwise have been, and give him an opportunity of much greater usefulness. Raphelius shews, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 185, 186.) that the word ὑπηρέτειν is sometimes used for *assistance* in general, where personal ministration and attendance is out of the question; and as it is here distinguished from, and prefixed to, *coming to him*, it may probably signify sending him food, books, or other accommodations. Compare Luke viii. 3.

a *Drusilla*

ercise; such an exercise, that he who maintains it may look forward with pleasure to the *unseen world*, and, through the grace of God in a Redeemer, may *entertain a cheerful hope* of that *resurrection*: which, how terrible soever it may be to *the unjust*, shall be to all *the righteous* the consummation of their joys and of their glory. SECT. liii. Ver. 15

Whatever *danger* such may incur in consequence of a steady regard to *that hope*, let them courageously *commit themselves to him that judgeth righteously*, who knows how to *raise them up protectors* where they might least expect it, and to make, as in this instance, those that are *strangers to religion and virtue* themselves, the means of *delivering them* from unreasonable and wicked *persecutors*, and not only of guarding *their lives* from violence, but of securing to them many *conveniences* and *comforts*. 22 23

SECT. LIV.

Paul, after having been heard by Felix several times, and once with great conviction, is nevertheless left a prisoner by him, when Festus his successor arrived at Cæsarea, before whom, being again accused by the Jews, he is obliged to appeal unto Cæsar. Acts XXIV. 24, *the end*; XXV. 1—12.

Acts XXIV. 24.

AND after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

Acts XXIV. 24.

AND after Paul had been kept *some days* in this gentle confinement at Cæsarea, *Felix*, who had been absent for a short time, *coming* thither again *with Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess*[a], *sent for Paul*, that he might hear from his own mouth what were the principles of his religion, and might gratify her curiosity as well as his own, in obliging that celebrated prisoner to give some account of himself before them; *and* he *heard him* discourse at large *concerning* that *faith in Christ* as the Messiah, which he taught SECT. liv. Acts XXIV. 24

a *Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess.*] Josephus gives us a particular account of this lady, who was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, and sister of that Agrippa mentioned in the *next section*. She had been married to Azizus, king of the Emesenes; but Felix, being struck with her beauty, which was remarkably great, made use of the agency of one Simon, a wicked Jew, who professed himself *a magician*, to persuade her to abandon her husband, and *marry him*; which, more to avoid the envy of her sister Bernice, than out of love to Felix, she did, though Azizus had but a little before submitted to *circumcision*, and so embraced Judaism, as the condition of the nuptials. She was afterwards (according to Dr. Hudson's interpretation of a dubious passage of Josephus, supported by the express testimony of Zonaras,) consumed with the son she had by Felix in a terrible eruption of Vesuvius. (See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 7, [al. 5,] § 1, 2.) That learned editor justly observes, on the testimony of Tacitus, (*Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 9,) that Felix was also married to *another Drusilla*, (probably before this,) the grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. See also *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Book I. chap. 1, § 8, p. 41—43.

SECT. liv.

Acts XXIV.

taught as of so great importance. But as Paul knew the character of his hearers, he took occasion to attend what he delivered on this subject with proper remarks, concerning the
25 obligations we are naturally under to the moral law, the guilt incurred in various instances by the breach of it, and the account finally to be given to God; all which render the knowledge of a Saviour, and a cordial acceptance of him, so absolutely necessary; *and* adding such illustrations *as* might best suit the characters and circumstances of the persons to whom he was addressing, *he* particularly *reasoned concerning righteousness*, as he knew Felix was an unjust and oppressive governor; *and* concerning *temperance*[b], as he knew that both he and Drusilla had notoriously violated it, she having left her lawful husband to cohabit with him; *and* to inforce these reasonings, he faithfully admonished all that heard him of an awful and tremendous *judgment* that was certainly *to come*, at which the highest personages should appear, and stand upon equal terms with others before that righteous tribunal. And while he was copiously and seriously insisting on these important subjects, as one who felt the weight of what he said, *Felix* was so deeply impressed, that he could not conceal the inward perturbation of his mind, but *trembling* in a manner that was apparent to Paul and all that were present, *answered* him, *Go thy way for this time*, for I have other engagements before me which require my attendance; *and I will take some future opportunity*[c] *to call for thee*, and hear thee talk more largely on these subjects than the urgency of my affairs will now admit.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

And

b *Concerning righteousness, and temperance.*] How suitable this discourse was to the character and circumstances of so unjust and lewd a prince, may appear from the *preceding note*, and *note* e on ver. 2, p. 250.

c *And I will take some future opportunity.*] This the phrase καιρὸν δὲ μεταλαβὼν fully expresses. He thought, it did not become the dignity of *a judge* on the bench to receive even such oblique admonitions and reproofs from *a prisoner*, and therefore might really intend to give him a fuller audience in private. Paul must no doubt discern those *marks of confusion*, that would be so apparent in his countenance, which would give him some hopes of succeeding in this important attempt for such a conversion, and consequently would give him spirit, when he resumed the discourse. This must naturally increase in Felix a conviction of his innocence, and esteem for his virtues; yet, in spite of all, he was so far from *reforming his life* in general, that he would not do justice to Paul, however the conviction might perhaps prevail so far, as to engage him to persist in his resolution of not delivering him to the Jews. How affecting an instance and illustration of the treachery of the human heart!

d *He*

SECT. liv.

Acts XXIV.

26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftner, and communed with him.

And this he said, as *he hoped also* at the same time *that money would be given him by Paul. that he might set him at liberty*[d]; for he had observed what he hinted in his defence against the Jews, (ver. 17,) that the alms of the Christians had been deposited in his hands, upon which account he hoped for some considerable ransom; *and therefore*, in this mean and dishonest view, *he sent the more frequently for him, and discoursed with him*, but never appeared under equal impressions any more. 26

27 But after two years, Portius Festus came into Felix room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Now after Paul had been in custody till *two years were ended, Felix was succeeded* in his government of that province *by Portius Festus: And* as he knew that he had by his oppressive administration furnished the people with abundant matter of accusation against him, *Felix* being *willing to ingratiate himself with the Jews* at quitting the government, in a vain hope that it might prevent them from pursuing him with their complaints, *left Paul a prisoner*[e]; though he was in his own conscience persuaded, not only of the innocence, but the worth of his character. 27

Acts XXV. 1. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

Acts XXV. 1.

When Festus therefore was come into the province of Judea, he had no sooner took possession of the government, but *after three days he went up from Cæsarea*, which was the usual residence of the Roman governors, *to Jerusalem*, the capital city; both that he might gratify his curiosity in the sight of so celebrated a place, and also that he might there, as at the fountain-head, inform himself of the present state of their public affairs. *And the high-priest, and* several persons of *the chief* rank *among the Jews, appeared before him* with an accusation *against Paul;* 2

2 Then the high-priest, and the chief of the

d *He hoped also that money would be given him*, &c.] He might not only have a view to *the money* collected by Paul, which he brought to Jerusalem; but perhaps he might also imagine, that, Paul being so considerable a person among the Christians, his charitable *sect*, that had *sold their possessions* to maintain *their poor brethren*, would contribute largely for his deliverance,

e *Left Paul a prisoner.*] It has already been observed, *note* e on chap. xxiv. 2, p. 250,) that this base artifice did not prevent their clamorous accusations from following him to Rome, which had certainly ruined him, had not the interest of his brother Pallas prevailed to obtain his pardon from Nero. How much more effectually had he consulted the peace of his mind, and on the whole the security of his fortune too, had he *reformed his life* on Paul's admonition, and cultivated those serious impressions which were once so strongly made upon his conscience!—It was during the *two years* of Paul's imprisonment here, that *those contentions* arose between the Jews and Gentiles, as to their respective rights in Cæsarea, which, after many tumults and slaughters of the Jews, were inflamed, rather than appeased, by the hearing at Rome, and did a great deal towards exasperating the Jewish nation to that *war*, which ended in its utter ruin. See *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* ii. *lib. cap.* 13, [al. 12,] § 7; & *cap.* 14, [al. 13,] § 4, 5.

SECT. LIV.

Acts XXV. 2.

Paul; *and* earnestly *intreated him* that he would not, as they pretended Lysias and Felix had done, obstruct the course of public justice against one whom they knew to be so notorious an offender; 3 *Begging* it as the only *favour* they desired *against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem* to be judged there; forming a scheme at the same time in their own secret purposes, of *laying an ambush* of desperate wretches for him, who they knew would readily undertake to intercept his journey, and *to* 4 *kill him by the way*[f]. *But Festus* prudently *answered*, as God inclined his heart[g], *that* as he had business of another kind to employ him while he continued at Jerusalem, he thought it best *Paul should be kept* a while longer *at Cæsarea, and that he himself would shortly set out* 5 *[for that place:] Therefore said he, let those of you who are* best *able* to manage the prosecution, and who can most conveniently undertake the journey, *go down* along *with* [*me,*] *and if there be any thing* criminal *in this man,* for which he should be punished by the Roman laws, *let them accuse him* in my hearing.

6 *And* thus *having continued among them more than ten days, he went down,* as he had said, *to Cæsarea;* and several of the Jews attended him, as being determined to lose no time, but to prosecute the affair in the most strenuous manner they possibly could. *And the next day, sitting down on the tribunal, he commanded Paul to be* 7 *brought* before him. *And when he appeared, the Jews who came down from Jerusalem,* presented themselves in a numerous company, and *stood round about* him; *bringing many heavy accusations against Paul,* like those which Tertullus had

the Jews, informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither.*

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me,* and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting in the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem, stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which

[f] *Laying an ambush to kill him by the way.*] The *high-priests* about this time were, according to the account Josephus gives of them, such monsters of rapine, tyranny, and cruelty, that it is not to be wondered, *such a design* should have been favoured by *him* who now bore the office. Josephus mentions a great number of *assassins* at this time, called *sicarii*, or *poignarders*, from the weapons they carried, by whom many innocent persons were murdered. *Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap* 13, [al. 12,] § 3.

[g] *Answered,* as God inclined his heart.] It was really strange, that Festus, who as *a new governor* could not but incline to make himself popular, should *deny this request,* when it seemed to be so reasonable, and came from persons of such eminent rank in the Jewish nation. If *curiosity* had inclined him to hear this cause himself, since it is certain, Paul might have been hurried up from Cæsarea within *four* or *five days* from the issuing of the order, and Festus stayed on the whole *more than ten* at Jerusalem, one would imagine he might have done it: But, when we consider how much edification to the churches depended on the continuance of *Paul's life,* and now evidently under God *his life* depended on this resolution of Festus, it must surely lead us to reflect, by what *invisible springs* the blessed God governs the world, with what silence, and yet at the same time with what wisdom and energy!

which they could not prove;

had formerly advanced before Felix, *which* nevertheless it was evident that *they were not* by any means *able to prove* by proper witnesses.

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cesar have I offended any thing at all.

Paul therefore, *while he answered for himself*, insisted on his innocence, and said, Whatever my accusers take upon them to alledge against me, I aver, that *neither against the law of the Jews*, to which I was expressing my regard at the very time I was seized, *nor against the temple*, to which I came with a design to worship there, *nor against Cæsar*, to whom I always have behaved as a peaceable subject, *have I committed any offence at all:* I openly deny their charge in every branch of it, and challenge them to make it out by proper evidence in any instance or in any degree.

9 But Festus willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

But Festus, willing to ingratiate himself with the Jews by so popular an action at the beginning of his government, *answered Paul and said*, I am a stranger in a great measure to the questions in debate among you, which the Jewish council must no doubt understand much better; *wilt thou* therefore *go up to Jerusalem*, when I return thither, *and there be judged before me* in their presence *concerning these things*, that so the persons who were eye-witnesses may be more easily produced, and I may have the sanction of the Sanhedrim's advice in the sentence I pass, in a cause which has given so great an alarm, and which is apprehended to be of such public importance? 9

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

But Paul, apprehensive of the attempt which might be made upon his life in his journey, or in the city itself, *said, I am standing at Cæsars' tribunal*[h], *where* as a Roman citizen *I ought to be judged;* and I insist upon my privilege of having my cause decided there; *I have done no wrong to the Jews, as thou*, O Festus, *knowest perfectly well*, and must have perceived clearly by what has this day been examined before thee. 10

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things

For if indeed I have done wrong to any, *or have committed any thing worthy of death*, I pretend not that there is any thing so sacred in my character as to exempt me from human jurisdiction; and in that case *I refuse not to die*, nor do I expect or desire any favour; *but* what I insist 11

h *I am standing at Cæsar's tribunal*] Grotius and other writers have abundantly proved, that the tribunal of the *Roman procurators* in the provinces, as it was held in Cæsar's name, and by commission from him, was looked upon as *Cæsar's tribunal.*

SECT. liv.

Acts XXV. 11

insist upon is strict and impartial justice equally due to all mankind; and *if*, as I know in my own conscience, and as thou hast from the course of this trial the greatest reason to believe, *there is nothing* but malice and falsehood [*in these things*] *of which these* mine enemies *accuse me, no man can* justly *give me up to them*, merely to gratify their prejudice and cruelty[i]. And since it is an affair of so great importance, in which I have reason to believe my life is concerned, *I* must insist upon the privilege which the laws of Rome give me, and *appeal unto* the hearing of *Cæsar* himself[k], before whom I doubt not but I shall be able to evince the justice of my cause.

things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cesar.

12 *Then Festus having spoken* for a while in private *with the* chief persons of the Roman army and state about him, who constituted a kind of *council*[l], called in the prisoner again, and *answered* him, *Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar thou shalt go:* For how desirous soever I am to oblige the people of my province, I will never allow myself, upon any occasion, to violate the privileges of a Roman citizen: I will therefore give proper orders as soon as possible for conveying thee to Rome, that thou mayest there be presented before the emperor himself.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cesar? unto Cesar shalt thou go.

In the mean time, Paul was remanded to his confinement, and his accusers returned to Jerusalem a second time, with the mortification of not having been able to accomplish their purpose against him.

IMPROVE-

i *No man can give me up to them*, merely to gratify, &c.] The *paraphrase* expresses the force of χαρισασθαι, which I knew not how to do by any *one English phrase*. This, as Dr. Lardner observes, will by no means prove, that the Jews had *the power of life and death* in their hands; (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2, § 10, Vol. I. p. 141, 142;) for Paul might reasonably apprehend, not only that he might be *murdered by the way*, (as he probably would have been,) but that, had the *Sanhedrim* condemned him, Festus might for political reasons have acted the part that Pilate did with respect to *our Lord*, in permitting and warranting the execution, though in his own conscience convinced of his innocence, and even declaring that conviction. See Mat. xxvii. 24, 26.

k *I appeal unto Cæsar.*] It is well known, that the *Roman law* allowed *such an appeal* to every citizen, before sentence was passed, and made it *highly penal* for any governor, after that, to proceed to any extremities against the person making it. See *Dr. Benson's Hist.* Vol. II. p. 237, and *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 9, p. 358.

l Constituted a kind of *council.*] Dr. Lardner has abundantly shewn, by apposite testimonies from Josephus, Philo and Dio, that it was customary for a considerable number of persons of some distinction to attend the *Roman prefects* into the provinces, with whom they were used to advise, especially in matters of judicature. (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2, § 16, Vol. I. p. 225—227.) See also *Mr. Biscoe*, (as above,) p. 359.

m We

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. liv.

In the conduct of Paul towards Felix, we see the character of a *gospel-minister* illustrated in a most amiable manner: What could argue greater *magnanimity*, than to *deal thus plainly* with a man in whose power his liberty was? Yet he did not *sooth* and *flatter* him, but acted the part of one *infinitely more concerned* about the *salvation of his hearers* than his own *temporal interest*. He chooses faithfully to represent the evil of *those vices* to which Felix was especially addicted, and displays the terrors of the *judgment to come*, as inforcing the sacred laws of *righteousness* and *temperance*, which Felix had presumed so notoriously to violate. Acts XXIV. —25

Let the haughtiest sinners know, even upon their *tribunals*, and upon their *thrones*, that the *universal Judge*, and the *universal King*, will shew his superior power, and will ere long call them to *his bar*; and, if they are conscious of allowed disobedience and rebellion against that supreme *Lord of all*, let them, like Felix, *tremble*.

Great is the force of *truth*, and of *conscience*, in which the *prisoner triumphs*, while the *judge trembles*. And O! how happily might *this consternation* have ended, had he *pursued the views* which were then opening on his mind! But, like thousands of awakened sinners in our day, he *deferred* the consideration of these important things to an *uncertain hereafter*. He talked of *a more convenient season* for reviewing them; *a season*, which, alas, never came! for, though he *heard again*, he *trembled no more*, that we can find, or if he did, it was *a vain terror*, while he went on *in that injustice* which had given him such dreadful apprehensions, of which *his leaving Paul bound* was a flagrant instance. Let every reader seriously weigh this remarkable, but terrible case, and take heed of *stifling present convictions*, lest they only serve to increase the weight of guilt, and to render the soul for ever more sensible of that *greater condemnation* to which it will be exposed by wickedly overbearing them. 25 Ver. 26 27

In the mean time, we do not find that Drusilla, though a Jewess, was thus alarmed[m]: She had been used to hear of a *future judgment*; perhaps too she trusted to her being *a daughter of Abraham*, or to the *expiations of the law*, which were never intended to answer such purposes; and so, notwithstanding the natural tenderness of her sex, was *proof against those terrors* which seized so strongly on *her husband*, though *an heathen*. Let it teach us to guard Acts XXV. 1—9

[m] We do not find, that Drusilla, &c.] For this excellent remark I am indebted to Bishop Atterbury in his unequalled *sermon* on this subject.

a *King*

SECT. LIV.

guard against those *false dependencies* which tend to *elude convictions*, that might otherwise be produced by the faithful preaching of the word of God. Let it teach us to *stop our ears* against those *syren songs* which would lull us into eternal ruin, even though they should come from the mouths of those who appear like *angels of light*; for the *prince of darkness* himself could preach no more *pernicious doctrines* than those which reconcile the hopes of salvation with a corrupt heart and an immoral life.

1—9 In the conduct of Festus, as well as of Felix, we see what *dangerous snares* power and grandeur may prove, to a man who is not influenced by resolute and courageous virtue: The liberty of the worthiest of mankind was *sacrificed by both*, to their political views of *ingratiating themselves with the Jewish people* Happy that ruler, who approving the equity of his administration to every man's conscience, has no need to court popular favour by *mean compliances*; and whom the greatest eagerness of men's *unjust demands* can never turn aside from that steady tenor of *justice* which a righteous God requires, and which will engage *that protection* and *favour* in which alone the most exalted creatures can be *happy*, in which alone they can be *safe*.

SECT. LV.

Agrippa and Bernice coming to visit Festus, Paul is at their request brought forth to be examined before them, in a large assembly of persons of considerable rank and figure. Acts XXV. 13, *to the end.*

Acts XXV. 13.

SECT. LV.

THUS Paul continued in confinement, by the order of Festus the governor, till an opportunity could be found of sending him to Rome, that he might there be tried by Cæsar. *And when some days were passed* after his appeal, *King Agrippa*, (the son of Herod Agrippa, and great grandson of Herod the Great,) who had considerable territories in that neighbourhood [a], *and*

Acts XXV. 13

Acts XXV. 13.

AND after certain days, King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea

[a] *King Agrippa.*] The prince here mentioned was the son of Herod Agrippa spoken of before, chap. xii. 1, (see *note* a on that text, p. 77,) and grandson of Aristobulus the son of *Herod the Great.* As he was but seventeen years of age when his father died, the emperor Claudius did not think proper to appoint him king of Judea in the room of his father, but made it a *Roman province*; however, on the death of his uncle Herod, he made him king of Chalcis, which, after he had governed it four years, he exchanged for a greater kingdom, and gave him the *tetrarchies* of Philip and Lysanias, to which Nero afterwards added part of Galilee, with several towns in Peræa. Josephus speaks largely of him in a multitude of passages, the most material of which are collected by Dr. Lardner, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 1, § 9, Vol. I. p. 46—50,) and Mr. Biscoe, (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. ii. § 3, p. 49, 50.)

b *And*

Cæsarea to salute Festus.

and Bernice his sister, with whom he was suspected of living in an incestuous commerce[b], *came to Cæsarea to pay their respects to Festus,* and to congratulate him on his arrival in the province. SECT. lv. Acts XXV. 13

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

And as they continued there many days, Festus, among other subjects of discourse which occurred, *laid before the king the business of Paul; saying, there is a certain man,* whose name is Paul, *left* here *in bonds by Felix*, who has occasioned a great deal of speculation in these parts, and indeed involved me in some difficulties: 14

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, desiring *to have* judgment against him.

Concerning whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews were very earnest in their applications to me, and *informed* [*me*] of him as a notorious criminal; *desiring judgment against him* for several facts which they laid to his charge, and pretended to be highly illegal. 15

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans, when a crime is charged upon a person, *to give up any man to destruction* (which I plainly perceived they intended to bring on this Paul) *till he that is accused have the accusers* openly produced, to give their evidence against him *face to face*[c], *and* he have also liberty to speak, *and be allowed an opportunity of making his defence as to the crime laid to his charge;* which has so evident a foundation in reason and equity, that one would imagine it should be the common law and custom of all mankind. 16

17 Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay, on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and I commanded the man to be brought forth.

When therefore upon this *they* attended me from Jerusalem, and *were come* with me *hither* to prosecute him here, *I without any delay sat down upon the tribunal, the* very *next day* after my arrival, *and commanded the man to be* 17

b *And Bernice* his sister, &c.] Of this incestuous commerce Juvenal speaks in a celebrated passage, (*Sat.* vi. ver. 155, & *seq.*) as well as Josephus in the passage cited below. It is certain, this lady had first been married to her own uncle, Herod king of Chalcis, after whose death, on the report of her scandalous familiarity with her brother Agrippa, she married Polemon king of Cilicia, whom she soon forsook, though he had submitted to *circumcision* to obtain the alliance. (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 7, [al. 5,] § 3.) This was also the person, whom Titus Vespasian so passionately loved, and whom he would have made *empress*, had not the clamours of the Romans prevented it. See *Sueton. in Tit. cap.* 7, *cum Not. Pitisc.* and *Tacit. Histor. lib.* ii. *cap.* 2, & 81.

c *Have the accusers face to face.*] That, according to the *Roman law*, accusations were not to be heard in the absence of the accused person, Dr. Lardner has shewn *Credib.* Book I. chap. 10, § 8, Vol. I. p. 515, 516.——It evidently appears from hence, (as Beza well argues,) that *the judgment* they demanded against Paul (ver. 15,) was *not a trial*, but *a sentence* upon a *previous conviction*, which they falsely and wickedly pretended; and probably, it was the knowledge, which Festus had of Paul's being *a Roman citizen*, that engaged him to determine to try the cause himself.

SECT. IV.

Acts XXV. 18

be brought forth before me. *Against whom, when the accusers stood up,* and offered what they had to say, *they brought no charge of such things as I supposed* they would have done, from the general clamour they had made against him, as

19 a seditious and dangerous person: *But* instead of this, they *had certain* matters of debate, or *questions* of a different nature, which they urged *against him* with great vehemence, *relating to* some niceties of *their own religion*[d]; *and* particularly *about one Jesus* of Nazareth *that was dead, whom Paul* unaccountably *affirmed to be alive;* though at the same time he acknowledged that he had been crucified at Jerusalem,

20 and expired on the cross. Of this he pretended to produce some extraordinary, and to me utterly incredible proofs: *But as I was* still *dubious of the question relating to him,* how far it might affect the state of the Jews in general, *I said* to Paul, *that, if he were willing, he should go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things* before me; where I thought I might have an opportunity of hearing the cause, and of examining into several particulars with greater ad-

21 vantage. *But Paul,* apprehensive (as I plainly perceived) of some clandestine attempt upon his life, was so averse to this, that he immediately prevented any further thought of trying him at Jerusalem, by pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen, and *appealing to be kept to the hearing of* [*our*] *august emperor* himself[e]; upon which *I commanded him to be kept* under confinement as before, *till I could send him to Cæsar* by some convenient opportunity.

22 *Then Agrippa said unto Festus,* I know this affair has made a great deal of noise in the world, and therefore shall be glad of an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity with a more particular and

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

19 But had certain questions against him, of their own superstition, and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cesar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also

[d] *Relating to their own religion.*] As Agrippa was a Jew, and now come to pay a visit of respect to Festus on his arrival at his province, it is improbable, (whatever Beza insinuates to the contrary,) that he would use so rude a word as *superstition*, so that *this text* affords a farther argument, that the word Δεισιδαιμονια will admit *a milder interpretation*, like that given it above in the *version* of Acts xvii. 22. (See *note* i on that text, p. 166.) And it is very remarkable, not only that *the Jewish religion* is spoken of by *this word* in several *edicts* (reported by Josephus,) that were *made in its favour*, (*Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 10, [al. 17,] § 13, 14, 16, 18, 19;) but that Josephus himself uses it in the same sense too; *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 9, [al. 8,] § 3; where he has the phrase το της Δεισιδαιμονιας ακρατον, to signify their invincible attachment to their religion. See *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 476, 477.

[e] *Our august emperor.*] Since Augustus was not properly one of the names of Nero, (as it was of Titus,) I thought the import of Σεβαστος here, which was plainly a complimental form of speaking, might be most justly expressed by *this version.*

f I also

also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

and authentic account of it: so that *I also would desire to hear the man myself*[f], that I may learn from his own mouth what it is that he maintains, and on what principles he proceeds. *And* Festus who was willing to oblige the king in this respect as soon as possible, promised that *he* would order Paul to be produced, and *said, To-morrow thou shalt hear him*, as largely as thou pleasest.

SECT. IV. Acts XXV. 22

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus's commandment Paul was brought forth.

The next day therefore, king *Agrippa and* his sister *Bernice coming with great pomp* and splendor, *and entering into the place of audience, with the tribunes* and other officers of the Roman army, *and* likewise with the *principal men of* note and eminence in *the city* of Cæsarea, *at the command of Festus* the governor, *Paul was brought forth.* 23

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying, that he ought not to live any longer.

And Festus opened the occasion of their meeting with a short speech, and *said, O king Agrippa, and all ye who are present with us* in this numerous and splendid assembly, *ye see this man*, Paul of Tarsus, *concerning whom all the multitude of the Jews have pleaded with me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out* with the greatest earnestness, *that he* was a man of the most infamous and mischievous character, and *ought not* to be suffered *to live* upon earth *any longer.* 24

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

But for my own part, after the most diligent and impartial inquiry, *I could not apprehend him to have done any thing worthy of death*, or find that he was guilty of a breach of any of our laws; *yet* when I would have seen whether the Jews had any evidence at home to have supported any material charge against him, *as he himself* declined that trial to which I would have brought him at Jerusalem, and *has appealed to* the judgment of [*our*] *august emperor, I have determined to send him* to Rome to be heard by him. 25

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord. Wherefore I have brought him

But the account I have received of him is so confused and inconsistent, that he is one *concerning whom I have nothing certain to write to his* imperial *majesty*[g]: *Wherefore I have* this day *brought* 26

[f] *I also would desire to hear the man myself.*] No doubt but Agrippa had learnt from *his father*, by whom it is to be remembered, James had been put to death, and Peter imprisoned, (Acts xii. 2, 3,) and from many others, something of the history and pretensions of Christianity; so that he would naturally have *a curiosity* to see and discourse with *so eminent a Christian teacher* as Paul was; who, on account of what *he had been* in his unconverted state, was to be sure *more regarded* and talked of among the Jews, than any other of the *apostles.*

[g] *To his* imperial *Majesty.*] Τω κυριω plainly signifies, *To the great Lord of the empire*, a title, by which it is well known *the emperor* was now often spoken of.

SECT. lv.

Acts XXV.

brought him out before you all, *and especially before thee, O king Agrippa*, who art well acquainted with the Jewish customs, *that after* further *examination taken, I may have something* more intelligible and more considerable *to write*, and may know better how to represent his cause.

him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 *For it seems to me* very *absurd*, as I doubt not but it will also appear to you, *to send a prisoner* to be tried before Cæsar, *and not to signify also* at the same time what are *the crimes* or causes of complaint [*alledged*] *against him*, on which the emperor may proceed in giving judgment on his case.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 14 MYSTERIOUS as that dispensation was which permitted Paul's labours to be interrupted by *so long an imprisonment*, it is nevertheless very pleasant to trace the manner in which all was graciously over-ruled by a wise and kind providence. On this occasion he had an opportunity of *bearing his testimony*, first *before rulers* 13—17 *and kings* in Judea, and then in Rome, and in *the palace of Cæsar.*

None of the *jewels* which these princes might wear, none of the *revenues* which they might possess, were *of any value at all*, when compared with *the advantage* which their converse with Paul gave them, for learning *the way of salvation:* But how shamefully was *the advantage* neglected, even *the price* which was *put into their hands to get* this divine *wisdom*, (Prov. xvii. 16:) 19 Alas! how coldly do they speak of *the most important matters*, even those relating to *the death* and *resurrection* of him, by whose knowledge and grace alone hell was to be avoided and heaven secured! There was *a question about one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive:* A *doubtful question!* But, O Festus, why was 20 it doubtful to thee? Surely, because thou didst not think it *worth thy while* seriously to search into *the evidence* that attended it; else *that evidence* had opened upon thee till it had grown into *full conviction*, and this thine illustrious *prisoner* had led thee *into the glorious liberty of God's children;* had led thee to *a throne* far brighter than that of Cæsar, far more stable than *the foundations of the earth.*

22 It is no wonder that Agrippa had a curiosity *to hear Paul;* it is no wonder that *the gospel story* in general should *move curiosity;* but God forbid that it should be considered merely *as an amusement:* In that view it is *an amusement* that will cost men dear.

24—26 In the mean time *the prudence* of Festus is to be commended, who was desirous to get *farther information* in an affair of such a nature

nature as this; and *his equity*, which bore a testimony to the *innocence of the apostle*, is worthy of applause; as well as *the law* which provided, that *none should be condemned unheard*: a law, which, as it is common to all nations, (*courts of inquisition* only excepted,) ought to be *the rule* of our proceeding in all affairs, not only in public but private life; if we would avoid acting *an injurious part* in the censures we pass on the character of others, and exposing our own to the *just reproach*, which they seldom escape who take upon them to *judge a matter before they have heard it.* (Prov. xviii. 13.)

SECT. lv. 16 27

SECT. LVI.

Paul makes his defence before Agrippa, Festus, and the rest of the audience, in a manner which leads them to conclude he might have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Cæsar. Acts XXVI. 1. *to the end.*

ACTS XXVI. 1.

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.

—— Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself.

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

3 Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which

ACTS XXVI. 1.

SECT. lvi. Acts XXVI. 1

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, when he stood before him and Festus, and that great assembly of nobility and gentry which was met at his examination, *It is* now *permitted unto thee to speak for thyself*; do it therefore with freedom, and be assured that all due regard shall be paid to what thou hast to offer on this occasion.

Then Paul, stretching forth his hand in a graceful and respectful manner[a], addressed himself to the splendid audience before which he stood, and *made his defence* in terms like these:

O King Agrippa, I esteem myself peculiarly 2 *happy*, and look upon it as no small advantage to me and my cause, *that I am this day* called *to make my defence before thee, concerning all those things of which I am accused by the Jews*; *Espe-* 3 *cially as* I know that *thou art* accurately *acquainted with all* things that relate to *the customs* which prevail, *and the questions* which are in debate *among the Jews*[b]; to some of which my cause

a *Stretching forth his hand.*] Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 478, 479,) shews this to have been esteemed at that time *a very decent expression* of an earnestness in one that spoke in public, though some of the most illustrious *Greek orators* in earlier ages, such as Pericles, Themistocles, and Aristides, thought it *a point of modesty* to avoid it. But this was the effect of *a false taste*; and it is plain the eloquent Demosthenes, often used the same gesture with St. Paul here.

b *Especially as thou art acquainted with all the customs*, &c. Some *manuscripts* have added here ειδως, or επιστημενος, which our *translators* have received into their *version*; but there is no necessity for *this addition*, as appears from several instances of the *like* con-

SECT. IV.

Acts XXVI.

cause and discourse will refer: *wherefore I* humbly *intreat thee, that thou will hear me with patience* and indulgence, since it is necessary for me to enlarge circumstantially upon some im-
3 portant particulars, which cannot be justly represented in a few words.

which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 I will therefore begin with observing, that *the manner of my life from my youth, which from the beginning* of that age[c] *was spent among* those of *my own nation at Jerusalem, is* well *known to all*
5 *the Jews* there, *Who are acquainted with me from the first* of my setting out in the world, and indeed from the very time of my entrance upon a course of liberal education under that celebrated master Gamaliel; and *if they would* candidly *testify* what they know to be true, they would join with me in assuring you, *that I lived a Pharisee according to* the rules observed by that which you well know to be *the strictest sect of our religion*[d], in every thing relating not only to the written law of God, but likewise to the
6 traditions of the fathers. *And now I stand in judgment* in the midst of this assembly, not for any crime that I have committed, but indeed *for the hope of that promise* of a resurrection to eternal life and happiness by means of the Messiah, *which* in time past *was made by God*
7 *unto* [*our*] *fathers*[e]: *To* the accomplishment of

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews.

5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify,) that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which *promise*

construction in the most approved *Greek authors*, which are produced in their remarks on this place by De Dieu, and Raphelius. (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 187.) It is apparent, that Agrippa must have had great advantages for an accurate *acquaintance with the Jewish customs*, from his education under his father Herod Agrippa, and his long abode at Jerusalem; and agreeably to this, by the permission of *the emperor*, he had the direction of the *sacred treasure*, the government of *the temple*, and the right of nominating *the high-priest*, as Dr. Lardner has observed and proved; *Credib.* Book I. chap. 1, § 9, Vol. I. p. 49.

c *From the beginning* of that age.] Probably, as Dr. Wells observes in his just criticism on these words, (*Sacred Geograph.* Vol. III. p. 280,) he had *in his childhood* been brought up in the *schools* of Tarsus, and there formed to an acquaintance with the politest of the *Greek* and *Roman authors*, till he entered on a kind of *accademical course* under the celebrated Gamaliel about the 15th or 16th year of his age, when he came to Jerusalem, and was there educated *from the beginning of his youth.*

d *The strictest sect of our religion.*] So Josephus calls the sect of the Pharisees, almost in the very words which the *apostle* uses, *Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 5, [al. 4.] § 2, and in a variety of other passages collected by Mr. Biscoe at *Boyle's Lect.* chap. iv. § 3, p. 92. And Dr. Whitby has shewn, (in his learned *note* on this text,) that it was in many respects *stricter*, both as to doctrine and life, than that of the Essenes. It appears from the *gospels*, that many *rigorous severities* were used by them. (Compare Luke xviii. 11, 12: Mat. xxiii. 5, 23, 25, 28.) And Witsius assures us, (I suppose on the authority of some *rabbies*,) that they used to *sleep on narrow planks*, that falling down from them, they might soon be awakened to *prayer*, and that others *lay on gravel*, and placed *thorns* so near them, that they could not turn without being pricked by them. *Wits. Miletem. cap.* 1, § 15.

e *That promise which was made by God unto our fathers,*] See the *paraphrase* and *note* f and g on Luke xx. 37, 38, Vol. VII. § 208.

f *Why*

mise our twelve tribes instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come: for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

of *which* important [*promise*] all the known remainders of *our twelve tribes*, in one part of the world or another, *hope to attain*: and by the expectation which they have of it, are animated in all their labours and sufferings for religion, while they are *worshipping continually night and day*, in the stated and constant performance of their morning and evening devotions, whether in the temple, or in other places in which they present their prayers; *concerning which hope, O King Agrippa*, glorious and reasonable as it is, I may truly say *I am* now most unjustly and inconsistently *accused by the Jews*: For the doctrine I preach contains the fullest assurance and demonstration of a resurrection that ever was given to the world; and I am persuaded it is this that provokes those of my enemies who disbelieve it, to prosecute me with so much malice. But can there indeed be any evil in maintaining this doctrine myself, and endeavouring to convince others of it? Permit me, O my honoured auditors, to appeal to you and say, *Why should it be judged an incredible thing by* any of *you; that God*, a being of infinite perfections, and the original author of the human frame, *should raise the dead*, and continue their existence in a future state[f]? Will not his almighty power enable him to do it? and will not the honour of his moral attributes be hereby illustrated and vindicated? And if it be credible, is it not important enough to deserve the most attentive regard? I am confident, Sirs, you would all have thought it so, had you passed through such extraordinary scenes as occasioned a change in my views and conduct; which therefore I will plainly and fully open to this august assembly.

SECT. lvi.

Acts XXVI. 7

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

8

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

I once *indeed thought with myself, that I ought* in conscience *to do many things* most *contrary to the name*, and destructive of the interest and religion *of Jesus the Nazarene*, whom under that title I once impiously derided, esteeming all his pretences to be the Messiah most false and contemptible. I determined therefore to exert all my power against those who owned him under

9

[f] *Why should it be judged an incredible thing*, &c.] Beza would place a mark of *interrogation* after Τι, and read it, *What? Is it thought incredible?* &c.——which is indeed suited to the animated manner of Paul's speaking; and a thousand such examples occur in *ancient authors*, where the persons introduced must be supposed perfectly to understand *the rules of decorum*.

SECT. lvi.

Acts XXVI.

der that character; *Which accordingly I did* particularly *in Jerusalem*, where many now living were witnesses of my wild rage, *and* cannot but remember, how *I shut up many of the*
10 *saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests* to do it; *and* how *when some of them*] *were killed, I gave my vote against them*[g], and did all I could to animate both the rulers and the people to cut them off from the face of the earth; [Compare Acts viii. 1, 3;
11 xxii. 19, 20.] *And frequently punishing them in all the synagogues*, wherever I could meet with them, *I compelled them*, if I could possibly effect it, *to blaspheme* the name of Jesus Christ, which I now so highly revere[h], and openly to renounce all dependance upon him: *And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even to* those *foreign cities* to which some of them had fled, hunting out the poor refugees, and endeavouring to drive them not only out of their country but out of the world.
12 *In this view as I was going to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests* to execute this cruel purpose against all the Christians I could find there, [comp. Acts ix. 2, & seq.]
13 *At mid-day*, [*while I was*] *in the way* thither, and was drawing near the end of my journey, I solemnly declare before thee, *O King* Agrippa, and before this assembly, as in the presence of God, *I saw a* great and most astonishing *light from heaven, exceeding the splendour of the sun, shining about me, and those who travelled with me.*
14 *And when we were all fallen down to the earth*, as if we had been struck with lightning, *I* very dis-

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief-priests;

13 At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journied with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speak-

[g] *I gave my vote against them.*] Paul had no *vote* in the *Sanhedrim*, nor do we certainly know, that any more than Stephen were *put to death* for Christianity before Paul's conversion, in whose condemnation there was *no voting* at all. But the meaning plainly is, (as Beza well observes,) that he *instigated the people against them*, as much as he could, in that instance, and any other that might occur, whether at Jerusalem or elsewhere, which (as was hinted before, *note* on Acts xxii. 4, p. 230) might perhaps be more than are recorded: accordingly the *Syriac* renders it, *I joined with those that condemned them*; and Grotius observes, that the *Greek phrase* καταψηφον has sometimes this general signification.

[h] *I compelled them to blaspheme.*] I cannot think with the learned Witsius, that this refers to his obliging them to use that *form of prayer* ascribed to Gamaliel in which the *Christian religion* was mentioned as *heresy*; and by imposing which, he supposes, it was intended to prevent Christians from joining in *synagogue-worship*. (*Wits. Meletem. cap.* I. § 22.) But the frequent instances we have of the *apostles* going into the *synagogues*, and joining in their worship, plainly shew *that prayer* not to have been so anciently received. A known passage in Pliny, (*lib.* x. *epist.* 94) proves, that *Heathen persecutors* obliged Christians, that fell under the trial, not only to *renounce Christ*, but also to *curse him*; and I think, it appears from hence, that the Jews imposed *the like test* upon them.

i *The*

speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *It is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee:

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.

18 To open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and

distinctly *heard a voice speaking to me, and saying in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?* [*It is*] *hard for thee* to attempt an opposition to me, and madly to presume *to kick against the goads. And I said* in astonishment, *Who art thou, Lord,* and which way have I persecuted thee? *And* who can judge of my surprise, when *he* who appeared to me in this divine lustre and glory, *said, I am Jesus* the Nazarene, *whom thou persecutest* by the opposition thou art making to my cause and interest. *But* though, by engaging in this desperate attempt, thou hast forfeited thy life, I am determined graciously to spare it, and to use thee hereafter as the instrument of my glory; *arise,* therefore, *and stand upon thy feet; for to this purpose I have* in this extraordinary manner *appeared unto thee,* even *to ordain thee a minister* of my gospel, *and a witness both of the things which thou hast* now *seen, and of those in which I will* hereafter *appear unto thee:* And thou shalt experience my gracious presence with thee, *delivering thee from* the rage and malice of *the* Jewish *people, and* also *from* the dangers thou shalt encounter with among *the Gentiles, to whom I now send thee*[i]; That I may make thee instrumental by the preaching of my gospel *to open their eyes,* which are now in a miserable state of blindness, *that they may turn from* that spiritual *darkness* in which they are now involved,

15 16 17 18

i *The Gentiles, to whom I now send thee.*] This text entirely overthrows the scheme which Lord Barrington and Dr. Benson have taken so much pains to establish, relating to Paul's receiving *his first commission* to preach to the *idolatrous Gentiles* several years after his conversion, *viz.* in his *second journey* to Jerusalem. (See *note* a on Acts xxii. 17, p. 234.) To support that *hypothesis,* (for it is no more,) they are obliged to maintain, that *these words* were not spoken by Christ when he met him *on the way to Damascus,* but in the *vision* he had *in the temple* at the time referred to above. But, as the words make *a part of the sentence,* in which Christ bids him *rise* from the astonishment into which his appearance to him *on the way to Damascus* had thrown him, and as he afterwards (ver. 19, 20) speaks of his *first preaching Christ at Damascus,* as the effect of these words, I think every unprejudiced person must see, that they belong to the story of *his conversion:* And this is as reconcileable with *Peter's first opening the Christian church* to the *uncircumcised Gentiles,* as the *general commission* which Christ gave to *all the apostles* before his ascension. (Mark xvi. 15; Mat. xxviii. 19.) The plain answer to the seeming objection arising from both is, that though *these commissions* were indeed *very extensive,* yet they were not at first *fully understood* by those that received them; and Paul, as well as *the twelve,* might perhaps imagine, that, if *any Gentiles* were *converted,* (which, to be sure, the *apostles* all expected *multitudes* would be,) they must first be received into *the Jewish church* by *circumcision,* and then into *the Christian* by *baptism.*——Many good *manuscripts* and *ancient versions* do indeed leave out *νυν now;* (see *Dr. Mill in loc.*) but few of these read *αποστελλω, I will send thee;* and, if we admit the reading εις ους σε αποστελλω, *to whom I send thee,* the sense will be much the same, as if we retain that which is commonly received.

SECT. lvi. Acts XXVI.

ved, *to the light* of divine knowledge and holiness[k], *and from the power of Satan*, to which they are now in a wretched subjection, *unto* the love and service of *God; that* so *they may re*

18 *ceive* the free and full *forgiveness of* all their *sins*, be they ever so many, or ever so aggravated, *and* may obtain an *inheritance among them that are sanctified, through* that *faith which is in me*, which terminates in me as its great object, and consists in devoting the soul to my service, and committing it to my care as the Saviour of men.

and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 *From that* ever-memorable *time, O King Agrippa*, through the grace of God subduing my heart, *I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision*, with which he was pleased thus miraculously to

20 favour me: *But* I immediately engaged, with all the united powers of my soul, in the service of that divine master, against whose interest and kingdom I had hitherto been acting in so strenuous a manner; and accordingly I openly *declared, first to them at Damascus*, where I was going when this vision happened, *and* afterwards to those *at Jerusalem, and through all the country of Judea, and* [*then*] *to* all *the Gentiles* wherever I came, in my various and wide-extended travels from one country to another, *that they should repent* of their sins, *and turn to God*, with their whole hearts, *performing deeds worthy of* that *repentance* which they profess, and without which the sincerity of it can never be approved in his sight.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 Now let any one judge, whether for this I should be treated as a criminal worthy of death, or whether indeed I have deserved these bonds: Yet *on account of these things*, and for no other cause, *the Jews*, who have the same inveteracy against the gospel of Jesus that I once had, *seized me in the temple* some time ago, *attempted* in a tumultuous manner *to have killed me with their own hands*[l]: And since I was rescued at first

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

k *That they may turn*, &c.] This seems to be the sense of the *original*, τυ επιστρεψαι, which (as De Dieu observes,) may properly be rendered thus, without the need of any *supplement*; and this will best agree with the construction, and with the sense in which the word is generally used in other places, Compare chap. ix. 35. xi. 21. xv. 19. xxvi. 20. xxviii. 27.

l *To have killed me with their own hands.*] Beza justly observes, that this is the exact import of διαχειρισασθαι, which was the more properly used here, as there was reason to apprehend, that Paul would have been actually *pulled to pieces* [διασπασθη] in an assembly, as it seems, less numerous and less violent, than that which seized him *in the temple*. Compare chap. xxiii. 10, p. 243.

m *Having*

SECT. lvi.

Acts XXVI.

first by Lysias the Tribune, they have repeated the attempt again and again, contriving to assassinate me in my way to the council, before which they urged that I might again be brought.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

I impute it *therefore* to an extraordinary provi- 22
dence that I am yet alive, and publicly declare it with all thankfulness, that it is by *having obtained help from God* that *I continue until this day*[m]; and I endeavour to employ my life to the purposes for which it is prolonged, resolutely and courageously *testifying, both to small and great*, as what is really a matter of the greatest concern both to the meanest and the most exalted of mankind, the way of salvation by Christ Jesus my Lord: Thereby indeed in effect *saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses have declared should be;* That is, in 23
short, *that the Messiah having suffered, and being the first* of those *who rose from the dead* to an immortal life, *should discover light*, and be the means of revealing knowledge and happiness, both *to the people* of the Jews, *and* also *to the Gentiles;* that by following his instructions, and obeying his commands, they also might at length obtain a glorious resurrection, and a life of everlasting felicity in the heavenly world.

23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And, as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad.

And as he was thus making his defence, Festus, 24
astonished to hear him represent this despised gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, as a matter of such high and universal concern, and thinking the vision he had related as introductory to that assertion quite an incredible story, *said, with a loud voice*, which reached the whole auditory, *Paul, thou art distracted: Much study* of these ancient records, on which thou layest so great a stress, *drives thee to madness*[n]; or thou wouldst never

[m] *Having obtained help from God, &c.*] This may very probably express the sense he had of the late interposition of *Providence* in his favour, touched upon in *note* g on chap. xxv. 4, p. 262.

[n] *Much study drives thee to madness.*] This is the exact import of the *original*, Πολλα σε γραμματα εις μανιαν περιτρεπει. Perhaps he might know, that Paul in his present confinement spent a great deal of time in *reading*; and this was the most decent turn, that could be given to such *a mad charge*. But nothing can be at once more invidious and ridiculous, (as those two properties often go together,) than the gloss which Mr. Collins gives to these words, (*Grounds and Reasons*, p. 172,) as if Paul's applying the *Old Testament Scriptures* in an *allegorical sense* had led Festus to make this reflection; whereas it is not certain, that Paul quoted any *particular scripture* in this whole discourse, much less in an *allegorical interpretation;* nor would it have been possible for Festus, (an entire stranger to the *Jewish prophecies,*) to have made any judgment as to the propriety or impropriety with which they were *applied;* And any person of common candour would easily see, that, if *such a thing* had been in question, (as indeed it was not,) the conviction of Agrippa, so well versed in Jewish affairs, would have been a much stronger argument that the *prophecies* were *applied right*, than the censure of Festus could be for the contrary.

SECT. lvi.

never talk of such facts as these, or expect to be credited in such wild assertions o.

Acts XXVI.

But this invidious imputation was so far from provoking Paul to any indecency, that with a perfect command of himself *he* calmly and gravely *replied*, *I am not mad, most noble Festus; but* I *utter the words of truth and sobriety* p, which will bear the test of the severest examination; and I desire nothing more than that they may be brought to it. *For the King* himself *knoweth of these things*, and is no stranger to them, *to whom also I speak with freedom*, emboldened by his permission, and assured of his candour: *For I am persuaded* he has better and more favourable thoughts of what I have been saying, as *none of these things are* entirely *hidden from him; for this is not* [*an affair*] that was *transacted in a corner*; the death of Jesus, the preaching of his gospel, my rage against it, and sudden conversion to it, were all open and notorious facts, of the truth of which thousands had opportunity of being certainly and thoroughly informed; and I am satisfied the king has often heard of them: Nor can he be ignorant of the correspondence of these things to the predictions of the Old Testament: *O King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?* Yes, *I know that thou believest* them to have been written by a divine inspiration, and art aware of the weight of those arguments which are derived from the authority of their testimony.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou hast given such an account of these matters, and hast delivered what thou hast been saying in so natural and so earnest a manner, that *thou almost persuadest*

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

o In such wild assertions.] Besides what is hinted in the *paraphrase*, it would appear *quite absurd* to Festus, to hear Paul (as he did in the last sentence of his speech,) talk of *a resurrection from the dead*, accomplished in Jesus as *the first fruits*, or pretend, that *a person* should come from the Jews, whom he looked upon as *a barbarous nation*, who should *enlighten* not only *his own people*, but even *the Gentiles* too, and, among the rest, the polite and learned Romans and Greeks. This, in conjunction with what Paul had said of *the manner* in which this was *revealed to him*, would lead such *a half-thinker*, as Festus appears, to conclude roundly that he was *a visionary enthusiast*.

p *I am not mad*, &c.] This *answer*, in this connection, appears *inexpressibly beautiful*; and if great and good men, who meet with *rude and insolent treatment* in the defence of the gospel, (which is often the case,) learn to behave with *such moderation*, it will be a great accession of strength to the *christian cause*.—Raphelius shews, (as Beza had before observed,) that σωφροσυνη, *sobriety*, is with the strictest exactness opposed to μανια, *madness*; *Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 188.

q Thou

suadest me to become a Christian myself instead of condemning thee under that character q.

29 And Paul said, I would to God; that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

And Paul, powerfully struck with so remarkable an acknowledgement, *said*, with great fervency of spirit and yet with perfect decency, O King, *I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am except these bonds* r: My afflictions I would bear myself, till providence shall release me from them, but my satisfaction in the truth of the gospel is so entire, and the consolations I experience from it are so solid and noble, that I could wish nothing greater and better to this illustrious audience, than that every one present had an equal faith in it, and equal zeal to promote its interests; which I earnestly pray that God may excite in your hearts. 29

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them.

And as he said this, that the impression Paul began to make upon the court might reach no farther, *the King arose, and* Festus *the governor, and Bernice, and those who sat with them* upon the bench; for Agrippa was able to hear no more. 30

31 And when they were gone aside they talked between themselves, saying, This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds.

And when they had retired to the governor's apartment, *they spoke one with another, saying*, It is evident, so far as we can judge by this discourse, which hath all imaginable marks of candour and sincerity, that *this man*, whether his reasonings be or be not conclusive, *hath done nothing worthy* either *of death or of bonds*. 31

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

And Agrippa said to Festus. This man might certainly *have been set at liberty* upon this hearing, without any further debate, *if he had not appealed unto Cæsar* s: But as he has judged it necessary to take 32

q *Thou almost persuadest me to become a Christian.*] To interpret this as *an irony*, εν ολιγω με πειθεις, &c. as if he had said, "This is a very compendious way of persuading me to become *a Christian*," is supposing Agrippa very unseasonably and absurdly *ludicrous*; and though there may be some *ambiguity* in the words, if read alone, yet it is certain *the manner of his speaking*, which must either be very solemn and earnest, or, with a most contemptuous sneer, would *determine the sense* beyond all doubt. Now it plainly appears from *Paul's answer*, and from *the sense* in which he there uses εν ολιγω, *almost*, in opposition to εν πολλω, *altogether*, that he took him to mean *seriously*, that he *was almost persuaded*, and consequently that he did *indeed* mean so.——To explain the words, as if he had meant, "Thou persuadest me to be *almost a Christian*," or, "to become *an almost Christian*," that is, *an hypocritical professor*, is quite foreign to the purpose; nor could Agrippa have any temptation to be so.

r *Except these bonds.*] Some have thought (as Grotius does,) that he refers to *his imprisonment* in general, arguing, that it would have been *indecent* to have brought him to plead before Agrippa and Bernice in chains. But it has been justly replied, that such instances are to be found in antiquity. See *Tacit. Annal. lib.* iv. § 28.

s *This man might have been set at liberty*, &c.] Though this declaration of Agrippa would not secure *Paul's deliverance*, yet it might do him *some service*, that a testimony to *his innocence* was pronounced by so learned and honourable a person of the Jewish nation

SECT. IN. take that step, he has indeed put it out of our power to discharge him, and therefore he must stand or Cæsar's award: to whom it will be convenient to send him as soon as possible.

IMPROVEMENT.

PERHAPS does our blessed *Redeemer*, in this instance, appear to have answered his promise, that when his disciples *were brought before governors and kings for his sake, it should be given them in that hour what they should speak*. (Mat. x. 18, 19.) For indeed it is impossible to imagine what could have been said *more suitable* or what *more graceful*, than this discourse of Paul before Agrippa; in which the seriousness and spirituality of the *Christian*, the boldness of the *apostle*, and the politeness of the *gentleman* and the *scholar*, appear in a most beautiful contrast, or rather a most happy *union*.

Ver. 2 There was no appearance of *flattery*, in congratulating himself upon an opportunity of *speaking before one* skilled in the manners and in the records of the Jews; for the more *they* had been attended to, with the greater advantage would the cause of Christianity have appeared. There was no *arrogance* in his insisting upon
4, 5 *the strictness of his former life*; since *these things* which were once *gain to him*, he had long since *counted loss for Christ*. (Phil. iii. 7.) The exactness of *the end* that inspired him was proportionable to
7 *the manner* in which he was impressed with it: Well may they *serve God instantly day and night*, who have *the hope of a happy resurrection* before them: nor is *the hope* presumptuous and vain,
8 since it is founded on *a divine promise*: *Why should it seem incredible* with any, that he who gave life should restore it; *that God should raise the dead?*

9, 11 It was *this expectation* that supported the Christians, while *Saul breathed out threatenings and slaughter against them*; (Acts ix. 1,) while *mad* with a profane and impious rage against *Jesus of Nazareth*, he *compelled them to blaspheme*, and *persecuted them even to strange*

ness and religion. Festus would *probably entertain a better opinion of him* upon *this account*, and would give directions to *the officer*, who attended him, to treat him with so much *the greater regard*. I shall *only* add, that though it might seem in this view *an unhappy circumstance* that Paul had *made this appeal*; yet, as it was, at the time that he made it, *the properest method* he could take for his own security, he would have reason to reflect upon it with *satisfaction*, and we before observed, that his visiting Rome under the character of *a prisoner* was over-ruled by *Providence*, to answer some important purposes. Compare Phil. i. 12, *&c.*

† This discourse of Paul before Agrippa.] The reply of Paul to Agrippa is so excellently illustrated in *Three Discourses on Irresolution in Religion*, by my much honoured friend, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Clark of St. Albans, that I cannot but earnestly recommend them to the perusal of all, who desire thoroughly to enter into the strength and spirit of this beautiful part of the sacred story.

strange cities. But a conduct like this must occasion to him the keenest remorse, when he came to *know what he did,* and to see how gracious and condescending a *Lord* he had been *persecuting in his members:* When he took so gracious a method to reclaim him, it is no wonder that it left an indelible impression on his memory and on his heart. Indeed the story is so pleasant, and so instructive, that we may well *bear* to read it *a second* and *a third time;* or rather may *rejoice* in it, as so many instructive circumstances are added to those which we before endeavoured to illustrate and improve. (Compare Acts ix. 2—16. and xxii. 5—16.)

SECT. lvi.

Ver. 14, 15

14, 15

What can be more affecting than the view which *our Lord* here gives us of *the state* in which the gospel found men, in comparison with *that* into which it was intended to bring them? A gospel-ministry was *to open their eyes* before blinded, *to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God: that they might receive the remission of* their *sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified.* Enlighten, O Lord, the dark *corners of the earth:* vindicate the wretched *slaves of Satan* into the *glorious liberty of the children of God,* and adopt them to *that inheritance* which thou hast prepared for thy *sanctified ones.*

18

Wonderful scheme of divine goodness! and happy the men who are employed in promoting it! Let the profane world call their zeal *madness,* and account for it in a less decent and candid manner than Festus himself did; these would be found *the words of truth and sobriety,* and the God of truth and of wisdom will approve them as such, when *the wisdom of the world* shall all appear *foolishness* and madness. (1 Cor. iii. 19.)

24

25

God grant that none of us may rest in being *almost persuaded to be Christians;* when convictions begin to open, let us follow the celestial ray whithersoever it leads us, and *not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. Would to God, that all* who shall read or hear this discourse, might be *not only almost, but altogether* prevailed upon to be Christians, and might attain to *a temper* like that of the blessed Paul, even though *his bonds* were not to be *excepted!* For that religious joy which such a disposition must introduce, would render *chains,* yet heavier than his, *light;* and they would quickly be transformed into *ornaments of glory* which shall deck the soul in the presence of God, with a lustre infinitely superior to that which the diadem of Agrippa, or the robe of Festus, could.

28

19

29

SECT.

SECT. LVII.

Paul sets out on his voyage from Cæsarea to Rome, and having suffered great extremity in a storm, receives assurances of his preservation by a vision, which he communicates to his companions for their encouragement. Acts XXVII. 1—26.

SECT. lvii.

Acts XXVII. 1.

IT was observed at the conclusion of the last section, that Agrippa apprehended Paul might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar; but the appeal being made could not be recalled: *And* therefore, *as it was determined that we should sail into Italy*[a], *they delivered Paul and some other prisoners* in his circumstances[b] *to a centurion of the Augustan cohort, whose name was Julius. And going on board a ship of Adramyttis*, a city of Mysia not far from Pergamos, *we weighed anchor, intending to sail by the coasts of* the Lesser *Asia; Aristarchus a Macedonian*, a Christian brother of the city *of Thessalonica, being with us*[c], who was glad of the opportunity of attending Paul, on an occasion of so great importance to him, and to the church.

3 *And* steering our course northward from Cæsarea, *the next day we reached Sidon*, a celebrated city on the Phœnician shore; *and Julius* the centurion *treating Paul with great humanity, permitted* [*him*] *to go to his friends* there whom he had not been able to visit in his way to Jerusalem,

Acts XXVII. 1.

AND when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners, unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus a Macedonian, of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave

a *As it was determined that we should sail*] Some ancient *copies* and *versions* read it, *that* [*he*] *should sail*, which may seem most proper, as those that sent away Paul had no power over Luke or Aristarchus; yet *they also determined*, though freely, to sail.

b *They delivered Paul and some other prisoners.*] Dr. Lardner proves at large, particularly from several passages of Josephus, that prisoners of importance used frequently to be sent, as from other provinces, so from Judea, to Rome; *Credib* Book I. chap. 10, § 10, Vol. I. p. 531, 532.

c *Aristarchus a Macedonian*, &c.] This good man, by birth a Thessalonian, had been with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the tumult there, (chap. xix. 29,) where he had been seized by the mob, and exposed to great hazard. He afterwards attended him to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia. (Chap. xx. 4.) He now accompanied him to Rome, and was *a fellow-prisoner* with him there; (Col. iv. 10.) and is mentioned in Paul's epistle to Philemon, (ver. 24,) who was probably their common friend, as a valuable *assistant* in his ministerial work. It was to be sure a great comfort to the *apostle*, to have the company of two such friends as Luke and Aristarchus, as it was also a great instance of their affection to him, that they would follow him, when he was going as *a prisoner* to Rome, not being *ashamed of his bonds*, and especially, that they would attend him at a time, when they knew *sailing* to be *dangerous*. Compare ver. 9.

d *The*

gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

salem, (chap. xxi. 3, 7.) *and to enjoy the benefit of their* kind *care*, towards rendering his voyage as agreeable as they could, as well as affording him some present refreshment.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

4 *And weighing anchor from thence, we sailed under* the island of *Cyprus*, leaving it on the left hand, *because the winds* were in the south-west quarter, and so *were contrary* to us, and consequently prevented our taking the more direct course, which we might otherwise have done, by sailing more to the west, and leaving Cyprus to the north.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra *a city* of Lycia.

5 *And sailing through the sea* that lies *over-against Cilicia and Pamphylia*, without an opportunity of calling upon any of our friends at Tarsus, Attalia, Perga, or Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul had once and again made so delightful a progress, (see Acts xiii. 13, 14, xiv. 25, 26, xv. 40, 41.) *we came to* the port of *Myra*, [*a city*] *of Lysia*, whose celebrated promontory we might descry at a considerable distance.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

6 *And there the centurion finding a ship of Alexandria*, that was *bound for Italy*, quitting the other vessel which had brought us to Myra, *he put us on board it*, and embarked with us.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over-against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over-against Salmone:

7 *And when we had sailed slowly for several days* by Rhodes and several other small islands which lay near the Carian shore, *and were hardly got over-against* the point of *Cnidus*, a celebrated port of Caria, *the wind not permitting us* to make greater dispatch, *we* steered to the south, and *sailed under Crete, over-against* the promontory of *Salmone*, on the eastern coast of that island:

8 And hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called, The Fair Havens, nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

8 *And passing it with difficulty*, when we had made the cape, *we came to a certain place called The fair Havens*, the most considerable port in that part of Crete, *in the neighbourhood, of which was the city of Lasea* [d].

9 Now when much time

9 *And as much time was spent* in making of this little way, *and* the season of the year was so far

d *The city of Lasea.*] I see no reason, with Beza, to change this reading for *Alassa* or *Elea*, merely because we do not read of Lasea elsewhere. It is very possible, a place may be but *once mentioned* in ancient history, or that this may be the *Lasos* of Pliny, which he describes as situated in the *eastern* part of Crete; see *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. x. § 4. p. 379.) a circumstance which well suits the explication we have given, though not that of Beza, who takes Salmone to have been the promontory Salmonium, which he places in the *western coast*, a situation that no way agrees with the rest of the description, nor with the authority of Dionysius, *Perieg.* ver. 110. But this is not a place to adjust *geographical* controversies; otherwise I think it would be easy to shew, that this excellent *critic* has given, in many respects, a very wrong account of this voyage.

e *Sailing*

SECT. lvii.

Acts XXVII.

far advanced, that *sailing was now hazardous, because the fast* of expiation *was already over*, and consequently winter was coming on apace [e], *Paul* spake to those who had the chief direction 9 of the voyage, and prudently *exhorted them* not 10 to put out to sea; *Saying unto them, Sirs, I perceive, that* if *this voyage* be pursued according to the present scheme you have in view, it *will be attended with* much *injury and great damage, not only to the lading* that we have on board *and* to *the ship* itself, *but also* in all human probability *to our lives;* and therefore I should think it highly conducive to our common safety, rather to winter here than to attempt to proceed any farther.

time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them.*

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 *But* Julius *the centurion*, in whose breast the determination of the affair lay, *paid greater regard* in this instance *to* the opinion of *the pilot and the master of the vessel, than to those things which were spoken by Paul;* imagining, notwithstanding the esteem he had for him in other views, that these were more competent judges 12 in the business of navigation. *And as the haven*, notwithstanding its agreeable name, *was not commodious to winter in, the greater part* of the company *advised to set sail from thence, if they might possibly reach to Phœnice to winter there;* [*which is*] *a* kind of double *haven* on the southern coast *of Crete, looking to the south-west and north-west*, where, in consequence of a jutting point of land which defended it, they hoped on getting into the upper part of it, to lie secure from almost any wind that could blow.

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west, and north-west.

13 *And as* the weather came to be more favourable, and *the south-wind blew gently*, which would prevent their driving out to sea, *supposing they were* now *secure of their purpose*, and by the help of a side-wind might coast along the island, *they weighed anchor* from the Fair Havens, *and sailed on close to* the shore of *Crete* [f].

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

14 *But not long after* they had put to sea, the ship was in great danger, as on a sudden *there arose against*

14 But not long after there arose against it

[e] *Sailing was now hazardous, because the fast was already over.*] The *fast* here spoken of was *the day of atonement*, which was ordered to be kept *on the tenth day of the seventh month*, called *Tisri* by the Jews, and consequently must have been about the 25th of our *September*. (See Lev. xvi. 29. xxiii. 27. Numb. xxix. 7.) Philo, in several passages quoted by Dr. Whitby in his *note* here, speaks of this as *an ill time to sail*, as Aratus also does; and it would naturally be so, not only on account of *winter* approaching, but also because of the *Michaelmas flows*, that are still well known in the Mediterranean. See *Raphel. Not. ex Herod.* p. 397. and *Veget. de Re militari lib.* iv. *cap.* 39.

[f] *Close to Crete.*] That ασσον is to be taken as *an adverb*, and not as the name of a place, Beza has so fully demonstrated, that nothing need to be said in proof of it here.

it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

against it a very *tempestuous* whirling kind of *wind which* by the mariners in this sea *is called Euroclydon* or in modern language a Levanter[g], which often shifts the quarter from whence it blows, and accordingly, in our case, was first east and by north, and afterwards several degrees southward of the east. *And as the ship* 15

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive,

was violently hurried away by the force of it, *and was not able to bear up against the wind,* which was so very boisterous, that (as the seamen used to speak) she could not look the storm in the face, *we gave* [*her*] *up* to the wind, *and were driven* before it. *And running under a* 16

16 And running under a certain island, which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

certain island called Clauda, a little to the south of the western coast of Crete, the violence of the storm was such, that with the utmost difficulty *we were hardly able to get masters of the boat;* which we were willing to secure from being staved, as what might be of use in any exigence: *Which when* at last *they had hoisted* 17

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

up, they used all the *helps* they could to make the vessel able to ride out the storm, *undergirding the ship* to keep it from bulging; *and fearing*, as the wind had varied more to the north, and blew them towards Africa, *lest they should fall upon* the greater or the lesser Syrtis, those *quick-sands* on the African shore so famous for the destruction of mariners and vessels[h], *they struck sail*, that so their progress might be slower and some more favourable weather in the mean time might come for their relief, *and so were driven* before the wind. *And as we were ex-* 18

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with the tempest, the next

ceedingly tossed by the storm, and there was danger of the vessel's foundering, *the next day they lightened*

g *A tempestuous wind, which is called Euroclydon.*] The learned Dr. Bentley (in his *Remarks on Freethinking*, Part II. § 69, 70,) has taken a great deal of pains to establish the reading of the *Alexandrian Manuscript*, admitted also by Grotius and Cluverius,) *Sicil. Antiq. lib.* ii. p. 442,) which is ευροκλυων, agreeable to the vulgar *Euraquilo, the north-east wind*, which was indeed proper to carry the ship from Crete to the African shore, and so might expose them to the danger of the Syrtis. (Ver. 17.) But I think my learned friend Mr. Brekell, in his ingenious introduction to his discourse called *Euroclydon*, has advanced such objections against that interpretation as cannot be answered, and abundantly proved, that it could not be *a point-wind*, but was rather a kind of *hurricane*, often shifting its quarter, and accordingly not bearing them forward any one way, but tossing them backward and forward in the Adriatic; (ver. 27.) which is very agreeable to the account which the learned and accurate Dr. Shaw gives of the matter in his *Travels*, p. 358—361, where he explains it as one of the furious kind of winds, now called *Levanters*, which are *easterly winds*, not confined to one single point, but blowing in all directions from the *north-east* to the *south-east*.——See also *Erasmus* on this place.

h *Lest they should fall upon the quick-sands.*] See a good collection of the descriptions given of the greater and the lesser *Syrtis*, by approved writers of antiquity, in Gualterius's note on this verse.

i To

SECT. lvii.

Acts XXVII.

lightened the ship, by heaving over board the goods that she was laden with, and throwing out the heaviest wares into the sea. *And the third day* the tempest was so great, that all the
19 passengers as well as mariners were employed; and *we cast out with our own hands the* very *tackling of the ship*, which in such circumstances we should have been desirous to have preserved, preferably to the most precious wares with which she could have been laden.

20 *Now as* we knew not where the wind had driven us, for *neither sun nor stars appeared for several days*, and still the sea ran high, *and no small tempest pressed upon* [*us*,] *all* the little *remainder of hope, that we might be* saved and *delivered* from the danger we were in, *was* in a manner *taken away* from us; and the whole company expected nothing but that the ship would certainly be lost, and we should perish with it

21 *And when* in all this time they had no heart to think of taking any regular refreshment, so that *there was a great want of food*, and their distress was such that they were quite dispirited, *then Paul standing in the midst of them, said, Sirs*, if it were proper to reflect upon what is past, and now irretrievable, I might tell you that *you ought to have hearkened to me, and not to have loosed from Crete* at so inconvenient a time, *and* so *to have gained this injury and loss* which you have already suffered [i], and be exposed to that
22 distress which you are farther to endure. *Nevertheless, even now*, bad as the situation of affairs may appear, *I exhort you to be of good courage; for* though you are ready to conclude you

next *day* they lightned the ship:

19 And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, Ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be

i *To have gained this injury and loss.*] Both these words, ὕβριν καὶ ζημίαν are used ver. 10. and I doubt not, but they have here a reference to what the *apostle* had declared before.——The first, ὕβρις, generally signifies some kind of *wrong*; and accordingly, it, and its *compounds* and *derivatives*, are almost always used in this sense. (Compare 2 Cor. xii. 10. Matt. xxii. 6. Luke xi. 45. xviii. 32. Rom. i. 30. 1 Tim. i. 13.) But it extends to any *violent assault*, (Acts xiv. 5. 1 Thess. ii. 2.) and is here used for *that* of waves and winds. I apprehend the English word *injury* exactly corresponds to it, and is used in the same latitude: Thus none would scruple to say, *a ship* had been much *injured* by a storm.——The other word, ζημία signifies *a loss*, especially *a fine*; compare *note* f on Mark viii. 36. Vol VI. p. 467. Perhaps it may be used to insinuate, that this *loss* was a kind of *fine* paid for their own imprudence. *To gain a loss* seems so odd a phrase, that one would think κερδῆσαι was here put for *sustaining*, unless the use of it were intended to intimate, that, in such extreme danger, they were to look upon it as a circumstance of great advantage, *to escape with their lives*, or (as it is elsewhere expressed with great spirit,) *to have life given for a prey*, (Jer. xxi. 9. xxviii. 2. xxxix. 18. xlv. 5.) And it seems to me, that, in all the instances collected by Elsner here, though in another view, the word has precisely this sense and force; *Elsner Observ.* Vol. I. p. 486.

be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

you most inevitably perish, I assure you, that *there shall be no loss of any* single *life among you, but only of the ship*, which must indeed be dashed in pieces.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve:

Nor is it without good authority that I speak in so express and positive a manner, with regard to an event which seems to you at best very uncertain, or rather utterly improbable; *for there appeared to me this* very *night an angel of the God whose* servant and property I joyfully confess that *I am, and whom I* humbly and diligently *worship*, though most of you are so unhappy as to be ignorant of him: 23

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cesar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

He is so great a God, that all the heavenly hosts adore him, and are ever ready to execute his commands; and one of them hath come to visit me on this occasion, *saying, Fear not, Paul,* for *thou must be presented before* the tribunal of *Cæsar; and, behold, God hath* not only determined to rescue thee from this imminent danger, but he hath also *given thee* the lives of *all them that sail* in this vessel *with thee*, who shall be preserved for thy sake. 24

25 Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

Wherefore, take courage, Sirs, and lay aside your fears, *for I trust in God*, whose word is faithful, and his power almighty, *that it shall* certainly *be so, according to the manner in which it hath been spoken to me.* 25

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

But I know also, that *we must be cast upon a certain island*, and that the vessel will be wrecked upon the coast of it: Nevertheless we shall, if we take care to use the proper means for that purpose, all escape, and get safe to land; and from thence shall pursue our voyage to Italy more prosperously in another vessel. 26

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 3

We see in this renewed instance the great force of a virtuous character, and of a truly worthy and honourable behaviour, towards *engaging the esteem* of all around us. *Julius the centurion* had a reverence and affection for Paul, which, as in the beginning of this voyage it procured for him the satisfaction of *conversing with his friends* at Sidon, and receiving the fruit of their affection, so it was in the progress of it the occasion of *saving this great apostle's life*, and with it *that of the rest of the prisoners*, (ver. 42, 43.) Let us learn thus to soften the fierce and to convince the prejudiced, and humbly trust in that God who, *if our ways please him*, can turn *our enemies* into *friends*, (Prov. xvi. 7,) and can preserve and bless us, by means of those who were intended to be only the instruments of affliction.

From

SECT. lvii. From the account which is here given us of the ***danger*** and ***distress*** which Paul and his companions suffered *upon the mighty*
17, 20 *waters*, let us learn to pity those who being providentially engaged in *a sea-faring life*, are *often in* such *deaths* as these. When we hear, as it may be we do while far from the shores of our
23 island, *the stormy winds* raging around us, and see the effects of their fury in those stupendous instances which sometimes appear, let us *send up*, as it were upon their rapid wings, *our compassionate cries* to that God who *holds them all in his fists*, (Prov. xxx. 4) that he would *help* and *save those* that are ready to be *swallowed up quick* in a watery grave, and perhaps many of them, while just on the brink of eternity, in the number of those that are of all others most unprepared for it.

22--25 Happy the man, in whatever extremities of danger, that is conscious of *a relation to the God of heaven*, as his God and his father; that can say, like Paul, in this blessed parenthesis, *whose I am, and whom I serve!* Let us, when we can use the language, take *the comfort of it*, and commit ourselves to the guardian care of our God with cheerfulness: He *knoweth them that are his*, and will take care of *his own*. Let our faith put a reality into *all his promises*, that *it shall* certainly *be, even as he hath spoken unto us*. Thus let us *encourage ourselves in the Lord our God*, (1 Sam. xxx. 6.) and the event shall not shame our hopes; but we shall find by happy experience, that God will not only *save us from ruin*, but conduct us to *joy* as well as to *safety everlasting*. Amen.

SECT. LVIII.

Paul and his companions, after having suffered further extremities in their voyage, are at length shipwrecked on the shore of Malta; but all escape with their lives. Acts XXVII. 27, *to the end.*

Acts XXVII. 27.

SECT. lviii. SEVERAL threatening circumstances of the violent storm, which Paul and his companions met with in their voyage, were described
Acts XXVII. before; *and* we now proceed to observe, that
27 *when the fourteenth night was come, as we were tossed up and down in the Adriatic sea*[a], *the mariners suspected about midnight that they drew*
28 *near some land: And sounding* the depth of water,

Acts XXVII. 27.

BUT when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country:

28 And sounded, and

[a] *In the Adriatic sea.*] It is well known to those acquainted with *ancient geography*, that all that part of the Mediterranean which lay *south of Italy* was called *the Adriatic Sea*, and that which is now *the Gulf of Venice* was the *Sinus Adriaticus*. See *Grotius in loc.* and *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect.* chap. x. § 4, p. 380, 381.

b *Unless*

and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

water, *they found* [*it*] *twenty fathoms; and having gone a little way from thence, and sounding again, they found* [*it*] only *fifteen fathoms;* which decrease of their soundings convinced them, that this apprehension was just: *And* therefore,

29 Then, fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

29 *fearing lest they should fall upon some rocky shore,* where there might not be depth of water sufficient to keep the vessel from striking, *they cast four anchors out of the stern, and* heartily *wished, that the day would break,* and more clearly discover our situation.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

30 *But when the mariners* perceived the danger so extreme, they *endeavoured to flee out of the ship,* and to provide for their own safety by making to the shore; *and* when to compass their design they *had let down the boat into the sea,* and were just going into it, *under a pretence that they were about to carry out anchors from the ship head,* to make the vessel more secure by dropping them at a distance.

31 Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

31 *Paul,* who knew that it was the will of God that all proper endeavours should be used for their preservation, in a dependance on the promise he had given them, perceiving the design they had in view, *said to* Julius *the centurion and the soldiers* that were with him, *Unless these* mariners *continue in the ship,* without whose help we know not how to manage her, *ye cannot be saved*[b]; for the promise made you of your lives was to be understood, as given on condition of your taking the most prudential measures to secure them, which present circumstances will admit.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

32 *Then the soldiers,* who had learnt from their commander to pay a deference to what Paul said, that the success of this intended fraud might be effectually prevented, *cut off the cords of the boat,* by which it was fastened to the side of the ship, *and let it fall off* into the sea before any of the mariners were got into it.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all

33 *And while the day was coming on,* before they had light sufficient to discern what they should do, *Paul* earnestly *exhorted them all to take* [*some*] *food, saying, To day you are looking for the*

b *Unless these continue in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*] To what I have said of this in the *paraphrase* and *improvement,* I shall only add, that God foretold the deliverance of the ship's company as *certain,* though suspended on *this condition,* because he knew it would be complied with, and directed Paul to urge the necessity of that compliance, as what he knew would be the successful means of securing it, though none can deny, but these *sailors* had a natural power of going out of the ship, or the *soldiers* a natural power of permitting them to do it. The application of this remark to other affairs of greater moment appears to me both easy and important.

c *Continue*

SECT. lviii.

Acts XXVII.

the fourteenth day since you have been in this distress, *and* all of you *continue fasting, having taken nothing* of a regular meal[c]; the necessary consequence of which is, that you must thus be very faint and weak, and unfit for those fatigues which may farther lie before you; for it will be a narrow escape that we are to expect, and we may find great difficulties in getting on shore.

all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 As *therefore* till the morning rises we can attempt nothing by way of approach to land, *I exhort you* to improve this little interval of leisure, by making use of it *to take [some] food; since* it is plain that *this is* proper to be done *for your safety*, as it will make you fitter to act for your own preservation, according as future circumstances may require; and you may allow yourselves this refreshment with the greater cheerfulness, *for* I can renew the assurance I before gave, that whatever risque you run, and whatever labour we pass through, *not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you*[d].

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you:

35 *And when he had spoken thus, and had took bread, he* begged a blessing on it, and *gave thanks to God before them all*, for that provision which he gave them in their necessities, and for the assurance of life with which he had favoured them by so particular a revelation; *and having broken it, he* set them an example, and he himself *began to eat* heartily. *And being all encouraged* by the cheerful and pious discourse of the apostle, *they also took some food*, as he had done: and on the whole, sad as their circumstances were, they made a comfortable and refreshing meal. *And* by the way, *we* had a great number of persons aboard, and *were in all in the ship* no less than *two hundred and seventy-six souls*. *And* after they had done their meal, *being*

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all, and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

38 And when they had

Continue fasting, having taken nothing.] Appian speaks of an army, which for *twenty days* together *took neither food nor sleep*; by which he must mean, they never made *full meals*, nor slept *whole nights* together. The same interpretation must be given to *this phrase*, which Mr. Breekell also thinks may intimate, that they were now *at short allowance*, as they were like to have a much longer voyage than was at first intended, and had two hundred and seventy-six souls on board. (*Euroclydon*, p. 26.) But Grotius declares against this last opinion, which is to be sure uncertain, though I think it might possibly be the case, and that ver. 38 is not decisive to the contrary.

d *Not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you.*] Some think this alludes to a *custom* among mariners, to *make vows* in times of extremity, and to *shave their heads* in consequence of them, and so interpret these words, as if it were said, "You need not *vow your hair*; you shall be safe without that expedient." (See *Dryden's note on Juvenal*, p. 183.) But it appears to have been a *proverbial* and general expression of *entire safety*. Compare 1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xii. 7; xxi. 18.

had eaten enough, they lightned the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoisted up the main sail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers counsel

being satisfied with food, they once more *lightened the ship, and* having been told by Paul, that they should run upon some island, they threw away the very stores they had on board, and *cast out* the remainder of *the corn into the sea.* 38

SECT. lviii.

Acts XXVII.

And when it was day, they had the shore before them, but *did not know the land*, and still were at a loss what course to take; *but they perceived a certain creek, having a* level *shore* convenient for landing, *into which they were minded, if they were able, to have thrust the ship. And* 39 40 with this view, *when they had weighed their anchors, they committed* [*the ship*] *to the sea*[e], and tried to stand in for the creek, *at the same time loosing the rudder-bands*, that they might reach the land with greater safety[f], *and hoisting up the main sail to the wind*[g], which seemed to set right for their purpose, *they made for the shore. But falling on a place* which was a neck of land 41 *where two seas met*, such was the violence of the current, that *they ran the ship aground; and the forepart* which struck upon the sand *stuck fast, and remained immoveable, while the hinder part was broken* to pieces *by the force of the waves.*

In this critical juncture, as there were several 42 prisoners aboard, who were to be conveyed in custody to Rome, there was a most unjust and cruel purpose formed against them, *and the counsel of the soldiers was, that they should kill the*

e *When they had weighed the anchors, they committed* [*the ship*] *to the sea.*] Some rather choose to render this, that, *having cut the anchors, they left* them *in the sea*; and the *original* indeed is dubious, and will admit of either sense: Περιελοντες τας αγκυρας, εων εις την θαλασσαν. See *De Dieu in loc.*

f *Loosing the rudder-bands*; αναλυτες τας ζευκλησιας των πηδαλιων.] Dr. Benson observes, agreeably to the judgment of Grotius, that their ships in those days had commonly *two rudders*, one on each side, which were fastened to the ship by *bands* or chains, and, on *loosing these bands* the rudders sunk deeper into the sea, and by their weight rendered the ship less subject to be overset by the winds. (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 256.) But it seems rather, that the *rudders* had been *fastened* before, when they had let the vessel *drive*, and were now *loosened*, when they had need of them to *steer* her into the creek; and, after they had just been throwing out their *corn* to *lighten the ship*, it is not easy to suppose, they should immediately contrive a method to increase the weight of it.——That they had frequently *two rudders* to their ships, Bochart and Elsner have confirmed by several authorities. See *Bochart. Hieroz.* Part II. *lib.* 4, *cap.* 1, p. 453; and *Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 488, 489.

g *Hoisting up the main sail to the wind.*] So *our translators* render the word αρτεμωνα, and I, who am not accurately acquainted with the form either of ancient or of modern ships, shelter myself under their authority; but Grotius (who contends that σκαφη, ver. 17, signifies *the main mast*, and consequently that *the main sail* was now gone, ver. 19,) supposes, it was *a sail near the forepart of the ship*, answering either to what we call *the foremast*, or to *the bow-sprit*; which last seems to agree best with the account, which Stephens has collected from the most considerable authorities. See his *Latin Thesaurus*, in the word *Artemon.*

SECT. lviii.

the prisoners; lest any one should take this opportunity to *swim away, and* should *escape* out of their hands; of which they did not care to run the hazard, as they well knew how severe the Roman law was in such cases, where there was any room to suspect the guards of connivance or negligence. *But the centurion, being desirous to save* so worthy and considerable a person as *Paul*[h], *hindered them from* executing [*their*] *purpose, and commanded those that could swim to throw themselves out first into the sea, and get away to land: And* as for the *remainder, some* adventured themselves *upon planks*, with which the wreck supplied them, *and others upon some of* [*the things*] which they found means to get out *of the ship; and so*, through the singular care of divine Providence, *it came to pass* according to the prediction of Paul, *that they all got safe to land*, and there was not one single life lost.

[Acts XXVII.] 42 counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that they which could swim, should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship: and so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 31, 32 THE section we have now been reading, contains a remarkable illustration of the obligations we are under to *use the most proper means* for security and success, even while we are committing ourselves to the care of divine Providence, and waiting the accomplishment of God's *own promises*; For it would be most unreasonable to imagine, that he ever intended *any promise* to encourage rational creatures to act in a wild and irrational manner; or to remain *inactive*, when he has given them natural capacities of doing *something at least* for their own benefit. It is in exerting these that we are to expect his powerful aid; and all the grace, beauty, and wisdom of *the promise* would be lost, if we were to take it in any other view: To abuse it in a contrary view, is at best *vain and dangerous presumption*, if all pretence of relying upon it be not *profane hypocrisy*.

18, 19 How solicitous are *men in danger* for the preservation of this *mortal* and *perishing life!* They cast out *their goods* in a storm; they throw away *the tackling of the ship* to lighten it; and for many succeeding days *forget* even *to eat their bread*: O when shall we see *a solicitude* any thing like this about the concerns of their

h *Being desirous to save Paul.*] Thus God, for Paul's sake, not only saved all the rest of the *ship's company* from being *lost in the sea*, but kept *the prisoners* from being *murdered*, according to the unjust and barbarous proposal of *the soldiers*, who could have thought of no worse a scheme, had they been all *condemned malefactors*, and had these guards, instead of conveying them to their *trial*, been carrying them to the place of *execution*.

their *never-dying souls!* Alas, amidst the extremest danger, they are rather like those, who in such a storm as this, should have been *sleeping on the top of a mast.* (Prov. xxiii. 34.) Let us not wonder, if, when *awakened on a sudden*, and made to see and to feel the extremity of their case, they are for a while *taken off from attending* as usual *to their secular affairs;* nor rashly censure that as *madness*, which may be the first entrance of *true wisdom* into their minds. SECT. lviii. Ver. 33

We see how cheerful Paul was amidst the rage of winds and waves, under a sense of the faithful care of his God; and how the assurance which he gave to the rest, that *their lives should be preserved*, though their possessions in the ship were all lost, animated them to *eat their bread with cheerfulness.* With how much greater cheerfulness may *they* sustain *all temporal losses*, and relish in the midst of them *all the remaining bounties of Providence*, (as some always remain,) whose *eternal life* is *secured* by the word of God, and the engagement of *a covenant* which he has *confirmed by an oath?* 34--36

To conclude, It was to Paul that the *lives* of *those that sailed with him* were *given;* and his *fellow-prisoners* owed to him *a double preservation*, first from *the sword*, and then from *the sea.* Thus may a *relation to God's faithful servants*, and a community of interests with them, be the means of great *temporal advantage* even to those that are *strangers to the covenant of promise.* Surely after so many remarkable circumstances, pointing out the apostle to the *company of this ship* as a teacher commissioned by God, and favoured with extraordinary intercourses with him, they must be *very inexcusable* if they did not henceforward commence his attentive hearers and humble disciples. Those of them who did so, would find *their deliverance* from the fury of *the sea* but an earnest of *another deliverance* infinitely greater and better; and are long ere this lodged with him on a far more *hospitable shore*, and in a more *peaceful harbour*, than Malta, or than earth could afford. 24 42, 43 44

SECT. LIX.

Paul and his companions are hospitably entertained at Malta: he miraculously escapes the fatal effects of a viper's bite, cures Publius's father of a fever, and then pursues his voyage to Rome. Acts XXVIII. 1—16.

Acts XXVIII. 1.

AND when they were escaped, then they knew

Acts XXVIII. 1.

THE apostle Paul and all the rest of the ship's company having escaped the danger of the shipwreck, *and being* thus *got safe* [*to land*] they SECT. lix. Acts XXVIII. 1

SECT. lix.

Acts XXVIII.

they had no sooner reached the shore but some of the inhabitants came to them, and *they then knew that the island* on which they were cast *was called Melita*, or Malta[a]. *And the barbarians* of that place, (as the Romans, though in many respects more barbarous themselves, proudly accounted those who were its native inhabitants,) *treated us with* an *uncommon* degree of *humanity*[b], *for having kindled a fire, they brought us all to* [it,] *because of the present rain*, which had followed the storm, *and because of the cold*, with which we were almost ready to perish.

knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness, for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 *Now as Paul was gathering up a bundle of sticks, and laying them upon the fire, a viper* which had lain concealed among the wood *coming out of the heat*, upon feeling the warmth of the fire, *fastened upon his hand* and bit it. 4 *And as soon as the barbarians saw the fierce animal*[c] *hanging on his hand*, as they perceived he was a prisoner, and had some notion of a divine Providence and its moral government, *they said one to another, This man is certainly a murderer*[d], or some other detestable criminal, *whom* the divine *vengeance hath not permitted to live, though he be saved from* the danger of *the sea. But*

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the Barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance sufferеth not to live.

[a] *Melita*, or Malta.] It is well known that this small island about twelve miles broad and twenty long, and sixty distant from Sicily to the south,) took its name from the abundance of *honey* found in it: It also yields a great deal of *cotton*, and, though it has but three feet depth of earth above the solid rock, is very fruitful. Paul's shipwreck here engaged a kind of superstitious regard to it, in consequence of which it was given A. D. 1530, by the emperor Charles V. to the *knights* of St. John in Jerusalem, when they had been expelled from Rhodes by the Turks: They are a *thousand* in number, of whom *five hundred* always reside, and are called *Hospitallers*.

[b] *The barbarians treated us with uncommon humanity.*] The Greeks and Romans reckoned all other nations but their own Barbarians, as differing from them in their customs or language; and all mankind are therefore comprehended by the apostle Paul under the distinction of *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, Rom. i. 14. This island, which had several commodious havens, was peopled by a colony of the Phœnicians, and the inhabitants were noted for their civility to strangers. See *Diodor. Sic. lib.* v. *p.* 204. *Edit. Steph.*

[c] *The fierce animal.*] This is the proper import of the word θηριον here used. Bos has well shewn, (*Exercit.* p. 90, 91,) that the *physicians* use it to express any *poisonous animal*, and Lucian in particular applies it, as here, to *a viper*; (*Philopsend. tom.* ii. p. 333, *Edit. Grev.*) but to render it *beast* is by no means justifiable. See *Bochart. Hieroz.* Part II. *lib.* 3, *cap.* 2.

[d] *This man is certainly a murderer.*] Elsner says, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 489—491,) they concluded he was *a murderer*, rather than guilty of any other crime, because they saw *the viper* hanging *on his hand*, which therefore they judged to have been *the offending part*, according to *the rule* which (as he shews by many curious and entertaining instances,) prevailed much among the *ancients*, that persons were often remarkably punished in that part of the body, which had been the immediate instrument of their sin.——Beza justly observes, that ουκ εασεν should be rendered, according to its exact form, *hath not permitted*, to signify that they looked upon him as in effect *a dead man*, after having been *bit* by that venomous creature.

c *Seeing*

SECT. lix.

Acts XXVIII.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

But as the miraculous power of Christ instantly interposed to heal him, (compare Mark xvi. 18. Luke x. 19.) *he* without any manner of confusion *shaking off the fierce animal into the fire, suffered no evil*, and took no farther notice of what had happened. 5

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

However they expected, according to what they had known to be usual in such cases, that the venom would soon operate, in such a manner *that he should* either *have swollen, or suddenly have fallen down dead* upon the spot: *And having waited a considerable time* to observe the effect of it upon him, *and seeing no mischief* at all *befall him*[e] instead of taking him to be a murderer, *changing their minds they said, that he was* surely some deity, descended in a human form; as nothing less than the power of *a god* could ward off so extreme a danger[f]. 6

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

And in the neighbourhood of that place where our shipwrecked company had met with so kind a welcome, *there was the estate of the chief* magistrate or governor of *the island*[g], *whose name was Publius, who* with a generous and friendly disposition *having received us into his house, entertained us* there *in a* very *courteous* and hospitable *manner for three days* together. 7

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux; to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

And so it was, that at this very time *the father of Publius* was dangerously ill, *being seized with a fever and bloody flux*, by which he *was confined to his bed; to whom Paul going in*, made him a visit in the apartment where he lay, *and having prayed* for his recovery, *laid his hands on him, and healed him.* 8

9 So when this was done, others also which had diseases in the

Now therefore when this [*miracle*] *was wrought* on a person so well known, and of so great importance, the news of it soon spread abroad; and 9

as

c *Seeing no mischief befall him.*] Elsner observes, that many of the heathens thought, there was something *divine* in the nature of *serpents*, and that *deities*, or *good genii*, who were made use of as the instruments of delivering and honouring those that were the peculiar favourites of the gods, often appeared in that shape. (*Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 492, 493. Hence idols were often made with *serpents* near them; and there have been numerous, and indeed astonishing instances of *religious worship* paid to that kind of animal, absurd as it may seem. See *Revelat. exam. with Candour*, Vol. I. p. 80, 81. *Dr. Jenkins on Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 246—248. *Bp. Stillingfleet, Orig. Sacr.* p. 516—518. and *Dr. Cha. Owen on Serpents*, Dissert. IV. p. 216, 232.

f *They said that he was a God.*] Grotius Dr. Whitby and some others think, they took him for Hercules, Αλεξικακος, who was worshipped in this island, and was, according to Ptolemy, (*Geograph. lib.* iv. *cap.* 4.) one of the gods of the Phœnicians.

g *The chief of the island.*] Grotius has produced an ancient inscription, by which it appears, that the title of πρωτος or *chief*, was given to the governor of this island, and so it is used here by St. Luke with his usual propriety of expression.

h *Whose*

SECT. lix.

Acts XXVIII

as they were desirous to obtain the same advantage, all *the rest also who had disorders* of any kind *in the* whole *island*, as many as were able to travel, or could any way be brought, *came* to

the island, came and were healed:

10 Paul *and were healed*. And this was followed with the highest testimonies of esteem and gratitude from all the people, *who also* seeing such a divine power exerting itself by means of one in our company, *honoured us with great honours*, as men peculiarly favoured by heaven: *And* such was the respect and kindness they had for us, that *when we departed* thence, *they* brought us plenty of provision, and *put on board such things as were necessary* for our comfortable accommodation; so that by the good providence of God, and the generosity of these hospitable and grateful people, we were well furnished for pursuing our voyage to Rome.

10 Who also honoured us with many honours, and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

11 *And after* we had been ashore *three months*, *we departed* from thence, having shipped ourselves (as we had done before, chap. xxvii. 6.) *in a ship of Alexandria, that had wintered in the island, whose sign was* Gemini, or the twins, this is *Castor and Pollux* [h], fictitious deities of the heathen, who were supposed to have some peculiar power over storms; their figure therefore was placed on the head of the vessel, and

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 to them it was peculiarly dedicated. *And* not long after we had left Melita, we made the island of Sicily: and *being arrived at Syracuse* [i] the

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

h *Whose sign was Castor and Pollux.*] It was the custom of the ancients to have *images* on their ships, both at the *head* and *stern*, the first of which was called παρασημον, *the sign*, from which the ship was named, and the other was that of the tutelar deity, to whose care the ship was committed; which probably might give occasion to the fable that Europa was carried away by Jupiter in the shape of a bull. There is no doubt, but they had sometimes deities at the *head*; and then it is most likely, if they had any figure at the *stern*, it was the same, as it is hardly probable, the ship should be called by the name of one deity, and be committed to the care of another. (See *Lochart. Chan. lib.* ii. *cap.* 3, *init.* and *Mr. Bisco at Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 12, p. 326, 327.) The figure that was used for *Castor and Pollux*, as Dr. Lightfoot says, was that of two young men on horseback, with each of them a javelin in his hand, &c. But others have observed that *the sign of Castor and Pollux* was that of a double cross; and though the Greeks took them for a *sign in the zodiac*, which was called *the Twins*, and considered as sacred to these *fictitious deities*, whom they supposed to be the sons of Jupiter, by Leda, it was not at first represented by *two boys*, but by *two beasts*, as referring to the fruitfulness of *goats*, in producing *twin kids* about the time the sun was in that constellation. (See *Hyde Relig. Pres. cap.* 32. and *Nature Displayed*, Vol. I. § 2, p. 263, 264.) The appearance of both these constellation together was (as Dr. Hammond has observed, after Strabo, Pausanius, and other ancient writers,) thought *favourable to mariners*, and therefore for a good omen, they had them carved or painted on the *head* of the ship, and gave it a name from thence, which the sacred historian does not scruple to use.

i *Syracuse.*] This capital city of the island of Sicily lay on its eastern coast, and is said to have been twenty-two miles round, and to have equalled Carthage in its riches. (See *Strab. lib.* vi. p. 186; and *Liv.*

SECT. lix.

Acts XXVIII.

the most considerable city of that island, *we continued there three days.* *From thence we coasted round* the eastern shore of Sicily, *and came over-against* the city and promontory of *Rhegium* in the southermost part of Italy, from 13 which, as the name of that place implies, it was supposed the Island of Sicily was broken off. *And after* lying by *one day* we had a favourable gale, and *the south wind arising*, *we* pursued our voyage, and *came in two days to Puteoli*, a noted town for trade, which lay not far from Naples, and was very famous for its hot baths; *Where* 14 we had no sooner landed but *we found* some christian *brethren*, *and were* earnestly *intreated to stay with them seven days*, that they might have the better opportunity of hearing Paul, and of conversing with him; and the centurion was so good as to consent that we should stay: *And so*, having left the ship, *we went* the rest of the way by land *to Rome*.

13 And from thence fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

And from thence several of *the* christian *brethren* who resided at Rome, [k] *having heard of* 15 *our affairs*, and particularly that we were on our way thither, (as they were sensible of the great character of Paul, and the important obligations which they were under to him for his excellent epistle to the Romans, written a few years before this) *came out to meet us*, and to attend us in our entrance into that illustrious city: And [*some*] of them came *as far as Appii Forum*, a town adjoining to the famous Appian way, which was fifty-one miles distant from Rome; *and* [*others*] only *to* a place called Tres Tabernæ, or *the Three Taverns*, which was but about thirty: *Whom when Paul saw*, *he thanked God* for the encouragement which this circumstance gave him, to hope that these christian friends, who were so forward to begin an acquaintance with him, would be a support to him during his confinement there, and a means of promoting the success of any attempts of usefulness, which he might be able to make among them; *and* accordingly he *took courage* [l] and

15 And from thence when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-forum, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Liv. Hist. lib. xxv. *cap.* 31.) It was by this time well recovered from the desolation which Marcellus had brought upon it, two hundred and ten years before Christ, when the celebrated Archimedes was slain here.

k *The* christian *brethren* who resided at Rome.] It is very remarkable, that we have no certain information by whom Christianity was first preached in Rome. Probably, as some inhabitants of that most famous city were present at Jerusalem on the day of *Pentecost*, (Acts ii. 10.) they being converted themselves, might at their return carry the gospel thither, confirming it by miraculous works, and by the exercise of extraordinary gifts.

l *He thanked God, and took courage.*] This expression may perhaps intimate, that *his courage*

SECT. lix.

and pursued the small remainder of his journey with new spirit and alacrity.

Acts XXVIII 16

And when we came to Rome, Julius *the centurion,* who ever since we set out from Cæsarea had treated us in so friendly a manner, and whose regard for Paul could not but be greatly increased by what had passed at Melita, *delivered the prisoners,* according to his commission, *to the* prefect or *captain of the* prætorian *band* [m]: *But* as he gave a very kind and honourable account of *Paul,* he *was permitted to dwell apart* from the other prisoners *in an house of his own* [n] *with a* Roman *soldier that guarded him* [o], till his cause might be heard; which, by one accident and another, was put off from time to time, so that it was not dispatched till above two years after his arrival at Rome.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1,2

LET us again pause, and, on this new occasion of doing it, adore the wise conduct of *Providence,* though *its ways* were *in the sea, and its paths in the great waters.* (Psal. lxxvii. 19.) Still did our dear Redeemer take care of his faithful servants and ministers, not only delivering them and their companions from destruction

courage began in some measure to be *shaken.* He knew that there was a famous church at Rome, which had been long planted; (Rom. i. 8.) and to which, about *three years* before this journey, he had written a long epistle, (compare note c on Acts xx. 3, p. 201,) in which he had expressed an affectionate desire to see them; (Rom. i. 11. xv. 32. in the near view of doing which, he now *rejoiced,* esteeming it as the first fruits of their friendship, that they had come a day's journey to meet him, no doubt in a very kind and respectful manner. He might reasonably expect, they would contribute much to *lighten his bonds,* as no doubt they did, though so strange a *panic* seized them, when he appeared before Cæsar to make his apology, 2 Tim. iv. 16.

m *To the* præfect or *captain of the* prætorian *band.*] It was customary for prisoners, who were brought to Rome, to be delivered to this officer who had the charge of the *state prisoners,* as appears from the instance of Agrippa, who was taken into custody by Macro, the *prætorian præfect,* that succeeded Sejanus, (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 6. and from Trajan's order to Pliny, when two were in commission.) (*Plin. lib.* x. *epist.* 65.) See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Book I. chap. x. § 11, Vol. I. p. 532, 533; and *Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect* chap. ix. § 9, p. 360. The person, who had now this office, was the noted Burrhus Afranius; but, both before and after him, it was held by two: *Tacit. Annal. lib.* xii. § 42, & *lib.* xiv. § 51.

n *Apart from the other prisoners in an house of his own.*] Raphelius has shewn, (*Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 191.) that the expression κατ' ἰδίαν, may signify either *apart,* (for which see *Bos, Exercit.* p. 91,) or *at his own pleasure.* But it is well known, it often signifies *at one's own house*; and so ver. 30. seems to explain it here. By this means he was excused from all the affliction, which *lying in the common prison,* among the wretched creatures who would probably have been his companions there, must have given to a man of his sense, education, and piety.

o *With a soldier that guarded him.*] This soldier was probably chained to him, as the *Roman custom* was. Who, that had met Paul in these bonds, would have guessed at his real character, and have imagined him to have been one of the most upright, benevolent, and generous of mankind! Yet such the apostle undoubtedly was.

tion by shipwreck, but *providing* tenderly for them in their destitute condition, when their *wet* and probably *torn garments* seem to have been all they could call their own. The custom of Rome and Greece taught them to call *all nations* but their own *barbarous*; but surely the generosity which these uncultivated *inhabitants of Malta* shewed, was far more valuable than all the *varnish* which the politest education could give, where it taught not *humanity* and *compassion*. SECT. lix.

It is with pleasure that we trace amongst them the force of *conscience*, and the belief of *Providence*: which some more learned people have stupidly thought it philosophy to despise; But *they erred* in concluding that *calamities* must always be interpreted as *judgments*; and let us guard against *the same error*, lest, like them, we unwarily *censure*, not only *the innocent*, but the excellent of the earth. 4

God wrought a most seasonable miracle for the preservation of Paul from the fury of the *viper*; and this frank and honest, though *ignorant people*, immediately *retract their censure*: But, as human nature is apt to do, they fall immediately from one *extreme* to another, and from pronouncing him *a murderer*, conclude him *a god*. They afterwards submitted to be better taught, and learnt to *regard him* as what he really was, *a holy man* favoured of heaven, and raised up to be *an instrument of great good*, both to the *bodies* and *souls* of his fellow-creatures. Let us also be willing candidly to *correct* and *confess our mistakes*, when means of better information offer; and study to adjust our notions of men's characters *according to truth*; that we may neither *calumniate* nor *deify* them, but *judge righteous judgment*. (John vii. 24.) 5 6 10

Well was Publius, *the chief of the island*, with the *other inhabitants* of it, *rewarded* for their kindness to these distressed strangers, *by the cures* wrought on *the diseased* in their respective families; and naturally did *their kindness* and liberality to them *increase*, with such experience of the *miraculous power* which wrought by Paul. We cannot but conclude that this holy apostle, whose heart was always so warm with *zeal for Christ*, especially when it was quickened with *such a deliverance*, would take this happy opportunity of *diffusing the savour of his name* here. He would tell them, no doubt, *who it was healed them*, and *testify* to them of that *greater salvation* and *more important cure*, which they were to seek from him; nor can we imagine that *his labour was* entirely *in vain in the Lord*. Happy wreck! on the ruins of which *the temple of the Lord* was raised, and by occasion of which *Barbarians* were transformed into *Christians!* Who can say, how many *distempered minds* were *healed?* how many *sons and daughters* were *born to God* and *to glory*, in these *three months* which 7, 8, 9 11

SECT. LIX. Paul and Luke spent here? For modest as that *beloved physician* of souls, as well as of bodies, is in every thing relating to himself, we cannot imagine that he was *inactive* or *unsuccessful* in the pious labour. And how naturally did all this tend to *raise the regard* of the *ship's company* for these *servants of the most high God*, to whom, as *instruments* in the hand of his good Providence, they first *owed their lives*, and now *their accommodations*; to whom also, we hope, some of them *owed even their own souls!*

16 It is extremely probable, that the indulgence shewed to Paul in Rome, the remains of *liberty* which he enjoyed *while in bonds there*, and the much more valued *opportunities of usefulness* which that liberty gave him, were, in some degree at least, owing to the experience and report of *these extraordinary events*. Thus, *O Lord*, shalt thou *lead us* into whatever *difficulties* and *dangers* thou pleasest, and we will cheerfully wait *the happy event* which shall at length prove *the wisdom* and *kindness* of thy most mysterious conduct.

14, 16 In the mean time, even while travelling *in the bonds of affliction*, may we see thine hand in *all the countenance* which we meet with from *our Christian brethren*; and cheered with *their converse* and their *friendly offices*, may we, like Paul, *thank God, and take courage* in an humble assurance that thou wilt *stand by us* in every future unknown extremity; and wilt either manifest thy power and goodness in *raising up human supports*, or display thine all-sufficiency in a yet more glorious manner, by *bearing us up* when they all fail us!

SECT. LX.

The history concludes with an account of a solemn audience which Paul had of the Jews at Rome, soon after his arrival there; most of them reject the gospel he published among them, but he continues to preach it during two years of his confinement. Acts XXVIII. 17, *to the end.*

SECT. LX.

Acts XXVIII. 17.

PAUL's confinement at Rome was not so strict, but he had liberty to send for persons to him; *and* while he waited for his appeal to be determined, he was willing to remove the prejudices of his countrymen, and notwithstanding the injurious treatment he had met with, would suffer nothing to be wanting on his part, to make them sensible of the affectionate regard that he had for them: Accordingly *it came to pass that after* he had been there *three days, Paul called*

Acts XXVIII. 17.

AND it came to pass, that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together—

called together those that were the chief of the Jews who sojourned then at Rome. SECT. lx.

—And when they were come together, he said unto them. Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans:

And when, according to his desire, *they were come together* in the private house where he dwelt, *he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have done nothing contrary to* the interest and honour of *the* Jewish *people, or to* the authority of *our paternal customs* as derived from the holy patriarchs and Moses, *yet was I delivered a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; Who having examined me*, and heard all that my adversaries could suggest against me, *were willing to have set me at liberty; as there was no* offence which they could judge to be a sufficient *cause of* putting me to *death*, or of keeping me under longer confinement, to be discovered *in me. But when* some of *the Jews*, who in consequence of gross misrepresentations had entertained strong prejudices against me, contradicted and *opposed* my discharge, and were violently set upon preventing [*it*,] *I* found it necessary to remove my cause to Rome, and *was obliged to appeal to Cæsar:* And this I assure you I have done, *not as having any thing of which to accuse my own nation;* for whatever injury I have received from any particular persons, I heartily forgive them, and wish the whole Jewish people, without excepting even my most inveterate enemies among them, all possible prosperity and happiness; but I was, contrary to my inclination, forced on this appeal purely in my own defence, and to prevent that assassination which I knew some ill-disposed persons were contriving against me. *For this reason therefore*, as soon as I came hither *I intreated that I might see and speak with you*, my dear brethren, hoping to prevent any prejudice which might be entertained to my disadvantage: *For* indeed I am rather worthy of your compassion and friendship than of your resentment; as [*it is*] *on account of* that which is *the* great common *hope of* all *Israel*, that *I am bound with this chain;* my sufferings arising from my regard to that glorious Messiah for whom Israel professes to wait, and to that eternal life which he hath purchased and procured for those that receive him under that character.

Acts XXVIII 17

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

18

19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

19

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

20

And they said to him, We have neither received any *letters* as yet *from* Jerusalem, or any other part of *Judea, concerning thee; nor has any* one *of*

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither

21

SECT. IX.

Acts XXVIII

of the brethren of our nation *that has come hither, related* to us what is the purport of the charge on which thou art to be tried before Cæsar; *or* so much as *said any evil* at all *concerning thee.*

neither any of the brethren that came, shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 *But we* are willing thou shouldst give us an account of thy doctrine, and *desire to hear from thee what thou thinkest;* what thy particular sentiments are, and what thou hast to say in defence of thy tenets, as a disciple and missionary of Jesus of Nazareth; *for as concerning this sect* which professes so high a regard to him, *it is known to us* in the general, *that it is every where spoken against* [a], and that bad sentiments are entertained of it, both by the Jews and heathens; as teaching a revolt from those ways of worship in which people have been educated, even among us as well as them, and requiring unbounded subjection to a person who seems to have no imaginable claim to it.

22 But we desire to hear of thee, what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

23 *And having appointed him a* certain *day* which might best suit the convenience of most that were then present, *many* of them *came to him* in the morning *at his lodging; to whom he expounded* various passages of their own scriptures, as well as the chief principles of the Christian faith; *testifying* in the most cogent and pathetic manner the erection and establishment of *the kingdom of God* under the Messiah [b], *and* earnestly *persuading them of the things that relate to* the Lord *Jesus* under that character; which he proved *both from the law of Moses, and from* the writings of *the prophets:* And he was so intent upon this grand affair, that he continued his discourse *from morning till evening* [c].

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

And

[a] *It is every where spoken against.*] Some think, this refers to a fact mentioned by Justin Martyr, *Dialog. cum Triph.* p. 171, & 368, *Edit. Thirlb.*) and afterwards by Origen, *(contra. Cels. lib.* vi. p. 293, 294;) and Eusebius, *(Eccl. Hist. lib.* iv. *cap.* 18,) that the Jews at Jerusalem sent chosen men of the most distinguished character all over the world, representing the Christians as an *atheistical sect,* and charging them with the grossest calumnies, which the ignorant Heathens advanced against them. The fact itself is in all respects very credible; but I apprehend, that the exact *date of it* cannot be ascertained, nor can I any where find, (as some have asserted,) that it is mentioned by Philo Judæus. See my *Sermons on the power and grace of Christ,* &c. Vol. II.

[b] *Testifying the kingdom of God.*] Probably, as Mr. Cradock well observes, *(Apost. Hist.* Part II. p. 306,) he insisted on two topics:——that *the kingdom of God,* which they had so long expected, was of a *spiritual,* and not of a temporal nature;——and that *Jesus of Nazareth,* in whose name he preached, was the person foretold as *the promised Messiah* and Lord of that kingdom.

[c] *From morning till evening.*] The length of this conference shews, how zealous a desire Paul had for the conversion of his countrymen. It was undoubtedly a very curious and important discourse, and we should have wished to have been favoured with

SECT. IX.

Acts XXVIII.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

And the event of what he said was various; for *some* of them *were* happily *persuaded* to embrace Christianity, *by the things which were spoken; and some*, on the other hand, were influenced by such strong prejudices, that they *believed not*, but were so hardened as to reject the gospel, amidst all the evidence which he advanced to support it. 24

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers,

And so *disagreeing with each other, they brake up the assembly; Paul* only *saying* [*this*] *one word* in the close of all, on occasion of that obstinacy which he observed to prevail in most of them, *Surely well did the Holy Spirit speak by Isaiah the prophet to our fathers* of old, (Isa. vi. 9, 10,) and well does the description it has given of them set forth the hardness of your hearts, and suit you even to this day[d]; 25

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.

When it says, in that awful commission the prophet was commanded to discharge, "*Go to this* perverse and obstinate *people*, to whom I have so often sent in vain, *and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:* 26

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

For the heart of this people is become gross, and as it were grown stiff with fatness; *and with their ears they hear heavily*, in a dull, stupid way; *and they have drawn their eyes together*, as it were on purpose to compose themselves to sleep, *lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them:*" 27

As if he had said, They act in such a manner under the most awakening means, as if they had studied artful ways of rendering themselves insensible, and were determined not to receive my message, and the salvation which it proposes to them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the

Therefore be it known unto you, however your proud hearts may resent it, 28

that

with it, as well as with that of *our Lord*, of which we have only a general account, Luke xxiv. 27. But, as God (for wise reasons no doubt,) has seen fit to deny us that pleasure, let us acquiesce in this, that we know *enough* to confirm our faith in the gospel, if we discover *a teachable temper*; and, if we do not, the narration of other discourses and facts would probably have occasioned new cavils; for there is hardly any argument in favour of truth, from which a prejudiced and captious wit cannot draw an objection, and frame a sophistry to maintain error.

d *Well did the Holy Spirit speak to our fathers*, and well does the description suit you, &c.] The *apostle* here could not refer to them all, because *some believed*; but it is probable, *most of them* rejected the gospel. ——As for the quotation from Isaiah which he applies to them, I would observe, that it is quoted *oftener* than any other text from the *Old Testament*, (that is, six times,) in the *New*; (here, and Mat. xiii. 14, 15. Mark. iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. and Rom. xi. 8.) yet in such a variety of expression, as plainly proves, the *apostles* did not confine themselves exactly either to the words of the *original* or of the *Greek Version*.

e *Paul*

SECT. IX. Acts XXVIII.

that the salvation of God which you despise, and seem to fortify yourselves against, *is sent to the Gentiles; and they will hear* and embrace [*it*,] and so inherit the blessings which
28 you reject: To them therefore will we preach all the words of this life, and I in particular will from this day forward seek, in their faith and obedience, my consolation under that griéf which the infidelity of my brethren gives me.

the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 *And when he had said these things, the Jews departed* out of the place, not being prevailed upon to receive the gospel, yet *having great debates among themselves;* some thinking there was considerable weight in what Paul had urged to defend it, while others were enraged, and spoke of him and his arguments with great contempt and indignation.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 *But* nevertheless they who were most his enemies, and most desirous to add affliction to his bonds, were not permitted by providence to do him any harm; for after this *Paul continued two whole years* at *Rome*[e], *in his own hired house*[f], before he was heard by Cæsar, or his deputy, upon his appeal: *And* during this long period of time, he was solicitous to do all he could to promote the gospel of his divine Master, though he could not act so freely as he desired; in this view, therefore, he *received all that came to him* to be instructed in the design
31 and evidence of the gospel, *Preaching* with great ardor and zeal *the kingdom of God*, as established in the person of his exalted Son, *and teaching those things which relate to the Lord Jesus Christ*, and the religion he hath instituted in the world, *with all freedom of speech*, [*and*] *without any restraint* from the Roman magistrates. In consequence of this, many converts were made, and this confinement, which seemed to have so discouraging an aspect, was on the whole a means of

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

e *Paul continued two whole years* at Rome.] As Luke concludes his history with Paul's abode at Rome, before his *journey into Spain*, we may infer, as Dr. More observes, (*Theolog. Works* p. 220,) that he wrote both *his Gospel* and the *Acts*, while the *apostle* was still living, of whose actions he was himself an eye-witness, and by whom, it is very probable, *this book was revised*, as the *ancients* also say *his Gospel* was.

f *In his own hired house.*] Dr. Lardner proves *from* Ulpian, that the *proconsul* was to judge, whether a person under accusation were to be thrown into prison, or delivered to a soldier to keep, or committed to sureties, or trusted on his parole of honour. (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 10, § 9, Vol. I. p. 524, 525.) It appears from hence, that the *persecution* against Christians at Rome was not then begun; and perhaps *Paul's friends* in Nero's family (Phil. iv. 22,) used their interest with the *emperor* to procure him this liberty.

g Many

of promoting the gospel: Many of his retired hours were also employed in corresponding with the Christian churches, and writing several of those excellent epistles[g] which were to be so great a blessing to the most distant ages. SECT. IX.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us with pleasure observe that uniform tenor of *Christian zeal*, and compassionate regard to the salvation of men, which prevailed in the mind of Paul, and reigned in it even to the very *period* of this *history*, yea to that of *his life*. No sooner was he arrived at Rome, but an *earnest desire* of communicating the blessings of the gospel to his *kinsmen according to the flesh*, engaged him to *send for the Jews*, and to confer with them *concerning the kingdom of God;* generously forgetting *his own wrongs*, and waving those complaints he might so justly have made against his accusers and persecutors. He found them here, as well as in Judea, under prejudices which he could not conquer, with all his strength of reason and eloquence: They called the Christian religion *a sect*, and maintained that it was *every where spoken against;* Ver. 17, 19, 22

g Many of his retired hours were also employed in corresponding, *&c.*] It is well known, that the *Epistle* to the Ephesians, (or, as some think, to the Laodiceans, to whom however, it is certain Paul did write, Col. iv. 16,) to the Colossians, and Philippians, as well as that to Philemon, were written from hence during this imprisonment, and that to the Hebrews in or quickly after it; but, as for the *Second* to Timothy, I am ready to think it of a later date.—— It seems highly probable, that, about the end of the *two years* here spoken of, he was *set at liberty*. Some have questioned, whether he ever returned into the *East* again, which yet from Philem. verse 22, and Heb. xiii. 23, he seems to have expected. Clemens Romanus *(ad. Cor. Epist.* i. *cap.* 5,) expressly tells us that he preached *in the West*, and that to its utmost bounds, which must at least include Spain, whither he intended to go. Rom. xv. 24, 25. (See *Chrysost.* Vol. VIII. p 59.) Theodoret adds, that he went to the *Islands of the sea*, as elsewhere he numbers Gaul, (that is France,) and Britain, among the *disciples of the tent-maker.* (See *Bp. Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit.* p. 39.) But in what order he took these places, or how long he remained in any of them, cannot be determined.——We are told however, that about the *year of Christ* 65, or 67, (for chronologers differ, and I think we cannot exactly fix it,) he returned to Rome, where some say he met with Peter, who was thrown into prison with other Christians, on a pretence of being concerned in the burning of the city. Chrysostom tells us, that he here converted one of Nero's concubines, which so incensed that cruel prince, that he put him to death; probably after an imprisonment, in which the *Second Epistle* to Timothy was written.—It is, I think universally agreed, among all ancient writers who mention his death, that he was *beheaded* at Aquæ Salviæ, three miles from Rome; for, being *free of that city*, he could not be *crucified*, as Peter was, according to the tradition of the *Latin church*, on the very same day. It is said, and there is great reason to believe it, that this glorious confessor gave his head to the fatal stroke with the greatest cheerfulness, and also, that he was *buried* in the *Via Ostensis*, two miles from Rome, where *Constantine the Great* erected *a church* to his memory, A. D. 318, which was successively repaired and beautified by *Theodosius the Great*, and the Empress Placidia. (See *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 22. *Not. Fleury's Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. Book II. chap. 25; and *Dr. Well's Geogr. of the New Testament*, Part II. chap. 6, § 19—23.) But his most glorious monument remains in *his immortal writings*, which, if God spare my life to illustrate, I shall esteem the doing it one of the greatest honours which can be conferred upon me, and the most important service my pen can perform for the *church of Christ*.

SECT. IX.

against; But if this were indeed the case, how far was it from being any reason against embracing and obeying *the gospel!* since
Ver. all the men upon earth might attempt in vain to make falsehood
22 truth, and truth falsehood, in any single instance; and might as well pull *the sun* from the firmament, as, by all their malice and rage, *dethrone that blessed Redeemer* whom God hath established, by *a decree* firmer than *the ordinances of heaven.*

26, 27 No scripture of *the Old Testament* is more frequently referred to *in the New* than those words of Isaiah, which contain so just a description of what the Jewish nation was in the days of *that prophet*, and in those of Christ and his apostles. How deplorable a case! to be *spiritually blind* and *deaf* under the brightest light of *the gospel*, and its loudest proclamations! To *harden the heart* against the most gracious offers of *healing* and *life*, and to arm themselves against *their own salvation* with weapons of eternal
25 death! Justly were they at last *given over* by God, and *sealed up* under incurable obstinacy. May divine pity and help be extended to those who are marching on by large steps towards *the same*
28 *character*, and as it seems towards *the same end!* Adored be divine grace, that *any* are *inclined* to *hear*, and to *obey*. To them *the ministers of Christ* may *turn with pleasure*, and find, in their believing regards to the gospel, a sufficient recompence for all the labours and hazards they encounter in a faithful concern for its propagation.

To conclude all, Let us adore the gracious conduct of provi-
30, 31 dence, which secretly interposed to *moderate the apostle's confinement*, and thereby gave him an opportunity of performing various and extensive *services to the church*, of which he must otherwise have been incapable. *The wrath of man praises God;* and *the remainder of it* he *restrains*. (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) He hath allotted to *each of his servants*, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, a due proportion both of *labours* and *sufferings*, and neither earth nor hell shall be able so to break in on his schemes, as to obstruct the one or increase the other. The *sacred history*, which is now closing upon us, affords many illustrations of this remark: Let us be thankful for it; and while we peruse it, let us indulge those reflections which may naturally arise from it, to establish *our faith in the gospel*, and to quicken *our obedience to it.* Amen!

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE ACTS.

APPENDIX.

NUMBER I.

A DISSERTATION

On Sir Isaac Newton's Scheme for reducing the several Histories contained in the Evangelists to their proper Order.

THE name of *Sir Isaac Newton* is so justly celebrated through the learned world, that they who know he has endeavoured to establish a method of settling *a chronology of our Lord's life*, (for I think one can hardly call it *an harmony of the evangelists.*) quite different to what has hitherto been advanced, may be curious to know what it is, and why we presume to depart from it; since it is so natural to imagine, that such a genius must demonstrate whatever he attempts to prove. I therefore think it incumbent upon me to lay the scheme before my reader, as I promised long since to do. (Note [m] on Mat. iv. 25, Vol. VI. p. 197.) After which I shall briefly present, in one view, those reasons, many of which have been already hinted, which compelled me to tread a different road, after having most attentively considered all that this illustrious writer has urged for the support of his plan.

I cannot set myself to this task without feeling the fatigue of it sensibly allayed, by the pleasure with which I reflect on the *firm persuasion* which a person of his unequalled sagacity must have entertained of *the truth of christianity*, in order to his being engaged to take such pains in illustrating the *sacred oracles*: A pleasure which, I doubt not, every good reader will share with me: especially as according to the best information, whether public or private I could ever get, his firm faith in the *divine revelation* discovered itself in the most genuine fruits of substantial virtue and piety; and consequently gives us the justest reason to conclude, that he is now rejoicing in the happy effects of it, infinitely more than in all the applause which his *philosophical works* have procured him, though they have commanded a fame lasting as the world; the true theory of which he had discovered, and in spite of all the vain efforts of ignorance, pride, and their offspring bigotry, have arrayed him as it were in the beams of the sun, and inscribed his name among the constellations of heaven.

Sir Isaac Newton has given us his sentiments on the *Chronology* of

of *our Lord's history*, in his *Observations on Prophecy*, Book I. chap. xi. p. 144—168; and, according to his usual method, he has done it *concisely*, only marking out some of the out-lines; and after having endeavoured to establish some of the *chief principles*, by arguments which he judged to be conclusive, he leaves it to his readers to apply those principles to several other particulars; which being deducible from them, he did not think it necessary to enter into. Such is the method he has also taken in his *Chronology of ancient kingdoms*; and it was most suitable to that *great genius*, which bore him with such amazing velocity through so vast a circle of various literature. Yet it must render him less sensible of the difficulty attending some of his schemes than he would otherwise have been, and may leave room to those, who are justly sensible how much they are *his inferiors*, to shew by their remarks upon him, how possible it is for the *greatest of mankind* to be misled by some plausible appearances of things in a general view of them, against which invincible objections may arise, when they come to be applied to unthought-of particulars.

There are *many facts* recorded in the evangelists, the order of which is so plain that all harmonies agree in them; and such especially are most of those with which the *history begins*, and most of those with which it ends, though there be some disputes about a few circumstances relating to the *resurrection*: But Sir Isaac enters not at all into that part of the *history*, nor into any thing that precedes the appearance of *John the Baptist*.

He lays it down as the foundation of all his other reasonings and calculations here, on the authority of Luke iii. 1. that John began to baptize *in the fifteenth year of Tiberius*, reckoning his reign to have commenced from the *death of Augustus*, which happened, he says, August 28 *, in the *year of our Lord*, according to the common reckoning 29: This is said, Newt. p. 147,) to have been in the year of the *Julian period* 4727, which must surely be an error of the press for 4742, the year of *that period* which is universally known to have answered to the 29th of the received *Christian æra*. He supposes the Baptist's ministry opened in the spring, when the weather was warm; and allowing the remainder of the year to the spreading of his reputation, he concludes that *our Lord* was *baptized* before the end of it, when Tiberius's 16th year was begun. (Mat. iii. 1—17; Mark i. 1—11; Luke iii. 1—18, 21—23; John i. 6—18, Sect. 15—18. After this the temptation ensued, (Mat. iv. 1—11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1—13, Sect. 19.) and all those *testimonies* of John to Jesus, and the interviews between Jesus and his *first disciples*, which are mentioned, John i. 19, to the end, Sect 20—22, as likewise *our Lord's* journey to Galilee, and his *first miracle* there. John ii. 1—11, Sect. 23.) Then followed *our Lord's* FIRST PASSOVER which,

* This is a small mistake; for Suetonius (*Aug.* 100.) fixes it to xiv. *Kal. Septemb.* that is, *Aug.* 19.

which, according to Sir Isaac, and I would be understood through all this part of the Dissertation to be only reporting his opinion, happened *A. D.* 30, at which he drove the traders out of the temple, (John ii. 12, to the end, Sect. 24.) had that celebrated *conference with Nicodemus*, (John iii. 1—21, Sect. 25, 26 :) and continued for some time to abide in Judea baptizing by his disciples, while John baptized in Enon, and bore his last recorded testimony to him. (John iii. 22, to the end, Sect. 27.)

Thus the summer was spent, till John was *thrown into prison* about November, (Mat. xiv. 3—5 ; Luke iii. 19, 20. Mark vi. 17—20, Sect. 28.) and *our Lord* passed through Samaria in his way to Galilee about the *winter solstice*, that is, *four months before harvest:* (John iv. 1—42, Sect. 29, 30 ; See note[c] on John iv. 35.) After which he went, first to Cana in Galilee, (John iv. 43—54, Sect. 31.—) and then, after a *circuit* [or rather journey] in Galilee, (Mat. iv. 12 ; Mark i. 14, 15 ; Luke iv. 14, 15, Sect.—31, 32.—) he came and preached at Nazareth, Luke iv. 16—30, Sect. 32.—) and being rejected there, went and settled for a while at Capernaum, where he called Peter, Andrew, James, and John. (Mat. iv. 13—22 ; Mark i. 16—20 ; Luke iv. 31, 32 ; v. 1—11, Sect. 33, 34.) This our author thinks must have taken up *all the spring*, and must bring us to *our Lord's* SECOND PASSOVER, *A. D.* 31.

It is after this passover that Sir Isaac places another *circuit* through Galilee, which also carried his fame *throughout all Syria*, and added multitudes from thence, and from Decapolis, to those that followed him from Judea and Jerusalem. (Mat. iv. 23, to to the end ; Mark i. 28. Luke iv. 44. Sect.—36.) To those he preached the celebrated *sermon on the mount*, (Mat. v. vi. vii. Sect. 37—43.) Immediately after which he cured *the leper*, (Mat. xiii. 1—4 ; Mark i. 40, to the end ; Luke v. 12—16, Sect. 44,) the *centurion's servant*, (Mat. viii. 5—13 ; Luke vii. 1——10, Sect. 55,) and *Peter's mother in law*, with many others, (Mat. viii. 14, 17 ; Mark i. 29—38 ; Luke iv. 38—44, Sect. 35, 36.)——

By this time Sir Isaac supposes *the feast of tabernacles* approached, when *our Lord* passing through Samaria was *refused a lodging*, (Luke ix. 51—56, Sect. 127.—) to which he strangely supposes a reference, Mat. viii. 19, 20, (Sect. 69.)— After which, when the feast was over, and Christ returned from Jerusalem, toward winter, he *stilled a tempest* as he *crossed the sea*, (Mat. viii. 23—27 ; Mark iv. 35, to the end ; Luke viii. 22—25, Sect.—69 ;) and when he had landed, *dispossessed the legion ;* (Mat. viii. 28, to the end ; Mark v. 1—21 ; Luke viii. 26—40, Sect. 70.) And then returning again to the western side of the sea, cured *the paralytic*, (Mat ix. 1—8 ; Mark ii. 1—12 ; Luke v. 18—26, Sect. 45 ;—) called Matthew, Mat. ix. 1 ; Mark ii. 14 ; Luke v. 27, 28, Sect.—45 ;) and having been entertained at his house, (Mat. ix. 10—17 ; Mark ii. 15—22 ; Luke v. 29, to the end, Sect. 71,) went out to raise *Jairus's daughter*, curing the woman who

had *a bloody flux* by the way: (Mat. ix. 18—26; Mark v. 22, to the end; Luke viii. 41, to the end, Sect. 72.——) And after performing *other cures*, (Mat. ix. 27—34, Sect.—72,) he took another *circuit* in Galilee, (Mat. ix. 35, to the end, Sect.—73,) gave a charge to *his apostles*, and *sent them out*; (Mat. x. 1, to the end; xi. 1; Mark vi. 7—13; Luke ix. 1—6, Sect. 74—76.) After which, having answered the messengers which John had sent, he discourses with the people concerning him, (Mat. ix. 2—19; Luke vii. 18—35, Sect. 57, 58; and upbraids the impenitent *cities of Galilee*. (Mat. xi. 20, to the end, Sect. 59.) And as these events would employ the winter and the spring, our author places the THIRD PASSOVER here, *A. D.* 32.

He does not indeed expressly assert that this was *the feast* at which *our Lord* cured *the lame man* at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, and made that *defence* before the Sanhedrim related in the vth chapter of John: (Sect. 46—48.) But according to this general plan, this must be its proper place. And that there was a passover about this time, he argues from the story of the *disciples rubbing out the ears of corn*, which is related as in this place: (Mat. xii. 1—8; Mark ii. 23, to the end; Luke vi. 1—5, Sect. 49.) Soon after which happened the cure of the *withered hand*, (Mat. xii. 9—15; Mark iii. 1—7; Luke vi. 6—11, Sect. 50,) and a variety of *other miracles*, (Mat xii. 15—21; Mark iii. 7—12, Sect. 51,) with that of the dispossession imputed to a confederacy with Beelzebub. (Mat. xii. 22. to the end; Mark iii. 22, to the end; Luke xi. 14—36, Sect. 61—64.) Here Sir Isaac places the *parables* delivered *at the sea side*, as he supposes about seed-time, or the *feast of the tabernacles*; (Mat. xiii. 1—52; Mark iv. 1—34; Luke viii. 4—18, Sect. 65—68;) his renewed *visit* to Nazareth, (Math xiii. 53, to the end; Mark vi. 1—6, Sect. 73,—) and the *return* of *the twelve*, after having spent, as he supposes, a year in their embassy. (Mark vi. 30, 31; Luke ix. 10, Sect. 78.——

About this time our author places the *beheading of John the Baptist*, after he had been in *prison* two years and a quarter; (Mat. xiv. 1—12; Mark vi. 14—29; Luke ix. 7—9, Sect. 77.) After which those *multitudes* resorted to Christ, whom he *fed* with the *five loaves*, (Mat. xiv. 13—23; Mark vi. 30—46; Luke ix. 10—17; John vi. 1—15, Sect. 78,) and to whom, after having *crossed the lake*, (Mat. xiv. 24, to the end; Mark vi. 47, to the end; John vi. 16—21, Sect. 79.) he discourses concerning *the bread of life*. John vi. 21, to the end, Sect. 80—82.) As we are expressly told, John vi. 4, that when this miracle was wrought *the passover* was near, Sir Isaac concludes this to be the FOURTH PASSOVER after *our Lord's* baptism, *A. D.* 33, and argues from John vii. 1, that Christ did not celebrate it at Jerusalem.

Quickly after this followed the *dispute* with the scribes who came from Jerusalem: (Mat. xv. 1—20; Mark vii. 1—23; Sect. 83, 84; After which *our Lord* departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon;

Sidon; and after having *dispossessed* the daughter of a Syrophœnician woman, (Mat. xv. 21—28; Mark vii. 24, to the end, Sect. 85,) he returned to the *sea of Galilee*, where he *fed the four thousand* (Mat. xv. 29, to the end; Mark viii. 1—10, Sect. 86,) and after having replied to the unreasonable demand the Pharisees made of *a sign from heaven*, and cautioned his *disciples* against the *leaven* of their false doctrine, (Mat. xvi. 1—12; Mark viii. 11—26, Sect. 87) he came *to Cæsarea Philippi*, and having by the way acknowledged himself to be the Messiah, he was afterwards *transfigured*, and ejected an obstinate *dæmon*. (Mat. xvi. 13, to the end; xvii. 1—21; Mark viii. 27, to the end; ix. 1—29; Luke ix. 18—43, Sect. 88—91.) He then came to Capernaum, and made provision by a miracle to *pay the tribute*; (Mat. viii. 24, to the end, Sect. 92;) and there, or in the neighbourhood of it, discoursed of *humility*, *forgiveness*, &c. (Mat. viii. 1, to the end; Mark ix. 33, to the end; Luke ix. 46—48, Sect. 93—95.)

Our author takes no notice of the *mission* of the *seventy*, and their *return*, Luke x, 1—24, Sect. 97—106, but he would probably have placed it here, previous to that which he supposes to be *Christ's last departure* from Galilee, (Mat. xix. 1, 2; Mark x. 1, Sect. 135.—) when he went up to the *feast of tabernacles*. (John vii, viii. Sect. 98—105.) Neither does he take notice of the *visit* to Bethany; (Luke x. 38, to the end, Sect. 108;) nor of the *date* of any of those *discourses* which are recorded by Luke (from chap. xi. 1, to chap. xviii. 14, Sect. 109—129,) except where any passages happen to be parallel to those in Matthew, to which he hints they are to be reduced.

He then introduces *our Lord's visit* to Jerusalem, and the cure of the *blind man* at the *feast of dedication*, (John ix. x. Sect. 130—134; after which Christ retired *beyond Jordan*, (John x. 40,) where he treats of *divorce*, (Mat. xix. 3—12; Mark x. 2—12, Sect. 135,) blesses *the little children*, (Mat. xix. 13—15; Mark x. 13—16; Luke xviii. 15—17, Sect. 136,) answers, and remarks upon, *the young ruler*, (Mat. xix. 16, to the end; xx. 1—16; Mark x. 17—31; Luke xviii. 18—30, Sect. 137, 138.) After which, on the death of Lazarus, he returns to Bethany, and *raises him from the dead*, (John xi. 1—46, Sect. 139, 140,) and then withdraws to Ephraim, till the approach of the FIFTH PASSOVER after his baptism, which was *the last* of his life: The particulars of which are related at large by the *evangelists*, and with the subsequent circumstances of his *death*, *resurrection*, *appearances*, and *ascension*, make up the rest of this important history: But the contents need not be inserted here, as (for any thing that appears) there is no material difference between *a harmony* formed on Sir Isaac's principles or on ours.

I have taken the trouble of quoting the particular *passages* in each *evangelist*, as well as of every correspondent *section* in the *Family Expositor*, that it may be easy for any one, who desires it, to read over the whole *paraphrase* according to this *new scheme*: and also to

to see how it *transposes* the passages in question, and how it *differs* from what I judge to be the most exact method of disposition. And the attentive reader will easily see, that there is *a difference* in the *order* of several of the stories, and a much greater in the *dates* we have respectively assigned to several which are placed in the same order by both.

A repetition of *all the particulars* would perhaps be disagreeable; I shall therefore content myself here with observing in general, that Sir Isaac constantly follows the *order* of *Matthew*, whatever *transpositions* of *Mark* and *Luke* it may require, which we do not; and he also concludes there were FIVE PASSOVERS from the baptism to the death of Christ, whereas we, with the generality of *harmonizers*, suppose there were but FOUR. I have in my *notes* hinted at some considerations which determined me to the method I have taken: But it will be expected I should here at least touch upon them again, and give a view of them together; which I the rather do as they strongly illustrate each other.

The grand reason why I do not every where follow the *order* of Matthew, is in one word this, That both Mark and Luke do not only in several instances *agree* to place *the stories otherwise*, though we have not the least reason to think that one wrote from the other; but also that they do, one or another of them, *expressly assert*, "that the events in question actually happened *in a different order* from that in which Matthew relates them." Whereas it is observable, that in all such cases Matthew does not so expressly assert *his order*, as to contradict *theirs*. A few instances of this may be expedient, and a few shall suffice.

Thus, though Matthew relates the *cure* of *Peter's mother-in-law*, (Sect. 35,) in his viiith chapter, ver. 14, 15, after the *sermon on the mount*, and, according to Sir Isaac, some months after the *call* of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, which he had related chap. iv. 18—22; Mark says, this *cure* was *immediately after they came out of the synagogue*, into which they *entered straitway* after the *call* of those disciples, Mark i. 20—29.

Again, though Matthew gives us the story of Christ's calming *the sea*, dispossessing *Legion*, and curing *the paralytic*, in the latter part of his viiith and beginning of his ixth chapter, and does not relate the *parables* of the *sower*, *tares*, &c. delivered from the ship till the xiiith, and places so many facts between, that Sir Isaac concludes the *miracles* to have been wrought *in winter*, some time before the *Passover A. D.* 32, and the *parables* not to have been delivered till about the *Feast of Tabernacles*, almost a year after: Mark is very punctual in assuring us, (chap. iv. 35, *& seq.)* that, *in the evening of the same day* in which the *parables* were delivered from the ship, Jesus calmed *the sea*, and dispossessed *Legion;* for which reason I have followed him, and placed these *miracles* immediately after the *parables:* (sect 69, 70;) but have set that of *the paralytic* much higher, sect. 45,) as both Luke and Mark connect it strongly with the *cure of the leper*, which

which Sir Isaac allows to have happened immediately after the *sermon on the mount.*

Matthew relates the *message of John,* and those subsequent *discourses of our Lord,* which are contained in his xith chapter, after having given us an account of the *mission of the Apostles* in his xth. But Luke (who more accurately distinguishes between *their call,* Luke vi. 13—16; and *mission,* Luke ix. 2—6: as Mark also does, Mark iii. 13—19; and vi. 7—13,) places this *message,* together with the account of several *miracles* on which it is founded, as well as the *circuit* which *our Lord* made with the *twelve* before he sent them out, and the fore-mentioned *miracles* of calming *the sea,* dispossessing *Legion,* &c. between those two events, that is, the *call,* and actual *mission,* of the *twelve;* the one of which must in all reason be supposed considerably to precede the other; in which he also agrees with Mark, as was observed above.

Matthew also relates the story of the disciples *rubbing out the ears of corn,* and the cure of the *withered hand,* (chap. xii. 1—13.) after the *mission* of the *twelve;* whereas both Luke and Mark place which ever of those events they mention before the *choice* of them; (see Mark iii. 1—6; Luke vi. 1—11;) and Luke expressly says, that *choice* was *in those days,* (Luke vi. 12, 13,) that is, at the time which followed the fore-mentioned events.

These, and the discourse on *the unpardonable sin,* (sect. 61,) which we readily allow might have happened *twice,* are all the most material *transpositions* we have made; and I must submit it to the judgment of the reader, whether it be not more for the honour of the *New Testament* in general, to suppose that Matthew might not intend exactly to preserve the *order* of the history, where he asserts nothing directly concerning it, than to suppose both Mark and Luke to have mistaken it, when they so expressly declare their regard to it, as in some of these instances they do.

Sir Isaac indeed urges, that Matthew (as well as John, in whom I have made scarce any *transposition,)* was *an eye-witness:* but this can have no weight, unless it be certain, that he every-where intended to observe *an exact order,* which, for variety of reasons or causes, many of which may be to us unknown, he might not be solicitous about *. And I cannot forbear observing, that, on this great man's *own principles,* there cannot be a great deal in the argument; for, as Matthew was not *called* till chap. ix. 9, he could not, according to his hypothesis, have been *an eye* and *ear witness* to all the events from chap. iv. to that place; and, if (as Sir Isaac also argues,) he was *sent out* as one of the *twelve,* chap. x. *init.* and continued a year on his embassy, he could not be *such a witness* to what passed from the beginning of chap. xi. to the end of chap. xiii. where he places *their return* after a year's absence:

* Mr. Jcre. Jones has hinted at some conjectural reasons in his *Vindication of the former part of St. Matthew's gospel:* See *chap.* iii. p. 29—34.

absence: And these are *the chapters*, where we have made the greatest and most material *transpositions*, the others hardly deserving a mention.

If this branch of Sir Isaac's argument falls to the ground, and it be not allowed that Matthew observed a strict *chronological order*, that part of his reasoning, by which he would fix the *date* of each event, must fall with it; for, if it were to be granted, that Matthew hinted at the different *seasons of the year* when they passed, we could not *fix the chronology* by that, unless we were sure, that each was such a season *of a different year*, and not of the same, which on this supposition we cannot assert: But I think it very easy *(ex abundanti)* to shew, that passages, which Sir Isaac produces as *indications of the seasons*, are not so, or at least do not point them out *so punctually*, as they ought to do, in order to justify the uses he would make of them.

One cannot but wonder, that some of the arguments, which I have now in my eye, should ever have been urged by a writer of such extraordinary discernment; as for instance, that he should conclude *the Sermon on the mount* must be preached *later than the Passover*, because *multitudes* followed Christ in the open fields, which he says (p. 151.) was an argument of the *summer season:* though it is so apparent, that, when there were those *five thousand men besides women and children* assembled around him, whom he fed with the five loaves, *the Passover was* only *at hand;* (John vi. 4;) or that he should say, (p. 153,) *the storm*, mentioned Matt. viii. 23, "shews the *winter* was now come on," as if there were *no storms in the summer;* or once more, that it must be *seed-time* when the *parables* in Matt. xiii. were delivered, "because *sowing seed* is mentioned in them." (p. 154,) when it is so evident, (as I have observed elsewhere, note [d] on Mark iv. 3, Vol. VI. p. 340,) the very same principle would prove it to be *harvest*, as another *parable* delivered the same day refers to that *season*.

I am not willing to swell this *Dissertation;* and therefore, omitting many remarks which might easily be made on other passages, I will conclude with the mention of two or three particulars, which might contribute to lead this illustrious writer into some error.

One thing that has occasioned this was, his taking it for granted, (as I observed before,) that the *fifteenth year of Tiberius*, in which *John the Baptist* opened his ministry, must needs be reckoned from the *death of Augustus;* whereas it ought to be computed from the time, when Augustus made him *his colleague* in the empire. (See note [b] on Luke iii. 1, Vol. VI. p. 94.)

Another is, his admitting the *rabbinical rules* for the *translation* of the *Jewish feasts*, of which we have not one word, either in the *scriptures*, or in Josephus, or Philo. Yet it is on this principle, that he rejects some years from the possibility of being *the year of Christ's suffering*, because (as he imagines,) the *Passover*, two years before each, would not fall *late enough* to have *the corn ripe* on the

the *Sabbath* that succeeded the *Pascal**. (See notes [b] and [c] on Luke vi. 1, Vol. VI. p. 112, 113.)

And, to mention no more, a third principle (which is also very precarious, and yet has much stress laid upon it in Sir Isaac's scheme,) is, his taking it for granted, that, whenever Matthew speaks of *Christ's going about Galilee and preaching in the synagogues there*, he intended to tell us, that *our Lord* made *a circuit over all the country;* which, if it were admitted, might indeed make it necessary (if *Matthew's order* were to be the standard,) to suppose *a longer space of time*, than we or most others allow, to have passed between *his entrance* on his public work, and *the Passover* just preceding *the rubbing out the ears of corn*, which we own on both sides to have been two years before his death; for *four circuits* of this kind are mentioned, before we come to the xiith chapter of Matthew, where the story last referred to is recorded; the first, John iv. 43, and Luke iv. 14, 15; the second, Matt. iv. 23; the third, Matt. ix. 35; and the fourth, Matt. xi. 1. But if we should grant, that *his going about all Galilee* in the *second* of these instances, and *his going about all the cities and villages* in the *third*, (though that might only be those on the shore of the *Sea of Tiberias,)* were to be taken ever so literally, yet *his passing through Galilee* in his way from Sichar to Nazareth in the *first* instance, and *his departing*, that is, setting out *to teach and to preach in their cities* in the *fourth*, can infer no such conclusion.

This might be suggested, even if *Matthew's order* were to be admitted, and would invalidate the argument for protracting the years of *our Lord's ministry* on that supposition; but it is to be remembered, we have produced arguments to prove, *that order* must sometimes be *inverted*, and particularly, that *Christ going about all the cities and villages*, (Matt. ix. 35, sect. 73,) and *his departing to teach and to preach in their cities*, (Matt. xi. 1, sect. 76,) was some considerable time *after the Passover*, after which *the ears of corn* were *rubbed out.* (Matt. xii. 1, sect. 49.)

On the whole, I think, that, if *our order* be admitted, there is no part of *Christ's ministry* which seems so crouded with business, as *that* between his *last Passover but one*, and the following *Feast of Dedication.* But here, *our Harmony* allows *more time* for the work in Galilee, than Sir Isaac, who supposes "Christ never returned thither after the *Feast of Tabernacles;*" and I leave the reader to judge, whether, if such a variety of journies and events must be allowed to have happened in these *nine months*, or according to him in *six*, we may not by a parity of reason, or rather with greater, comprehend all the preceding within the compass of about *sixteen;* especially when it is considered, that, according to Sir Isaac, that *progress of our Lord*, for

* I shall content myself with observing here, that on these principles Sir Isaac places the *Passover*, A. D. 31, on Wednesday, March 28.——A. D. 32, on Monday, April 14.——A. D. 33, on Friday, April 3.——and A. D. 34, on Friday, April 23.

* To

for which *the apostles* were intended to make way, and that after the embassy of *the seventy*, must be thrown into the first *six months* of this year, and is an extreme, and I think insurmountable difficulty, into which we shall not be driven *.

I shall conclude this *Dissertation* with one *reflection*, which may perhaps be of some use to those, who have but little relish for the niceties of this inquiry: I mean, that, when we find *this great master*, and I had almost said, (so far as the title can be applied to a mortal man,) *this great father of reason*, falling into such *obvious mistakes*,

* To make the reader more sensible of this, I shall add a brief survey of the *compass of time*, within which I suppose the principal events between the several *Passovers* of *our Lord's ministry* to have happened, referring him to the following *chronological table* for a more exact view of them.

Events which we suppose between the first and second of our Lord's Passovers.

Our Lord spends the *summer*, and beginning of the *winter*, in Judea; about the *winter solstice* passes through Samaria into Galilee; (§ 25—30;) spends the remainder of the *winter* and the *spring* in a *circuit* through Galilee, in which are included his visit to Nazareth, and short stay at Capernaum; and toward the close of the *circuit*, having preached his celebrated *sermon on the mount*, returns to Capernaum.—§ 31—45.

Events between the second and third Passovers.

After vindicating what passed upon *rubbing out the ears of corn*, and curing the *withered hand*, he travels to the *Sea of Galilee*, chooses his *apostles*, and makes another abode at Capernaum; visits Naim, and dismisses *John's messengers*; all which might pass before the end of May; (§ 46—60;) then travels with *the twelve* in his train, (Luke viii. 1; Matt. ix. 35,) through the places near the *Sea of Tiberius*, perhaps during the months of June, July, and August; (§ 61—73;) and, intending a much more extensive *circuit*, dispatches *the twelve* to make way for him, and probably setting out quickly after them, might employ *six months* in this part of it, (§ 74—77,) and leave sufficient time for his interview with the *five thousand* whom he miracuously fed, and his conference with the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* from Jerusalem before the next *Passover*. (§ 78—84.)

Events between Christ's third Passover and the Feast of Dedication, which preceded his fourth.

Allowing the time between the *Passover* and the end of May for his journey to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and other Places in Galilee, he might return to Dalmanutha, and feed the *four thousand* by that time; (§ 85, 86;) and, if subsequent events and discourses, (recorded § 87—96,) employed him till the end of June, he might then send out *the seventy*, and they might easily meet him at Jerusalem at the *Feast of Tabernacles* in September; between which, and the *Feast of Dedication* near the end of December, we must place *his last circuit* in Galilee, (§ 97—127,) unless (which is possible,) we suppose it to have been quickly after the *mission of the seventy*, and so some part of July and September to have been employed in it: And indeed one cannot imagine any necessity, that *all the seventy*, or *all the apostles*, should have finished their progress, before *our Lord* began to follow those who were sent to the nearest places; or, if we should suppose it, and follow *Sir Isaac's scheme*, we must of necessity place the *two circuits*, which followed these *two embassies*, within this space of time, as was hinted above; whereas, if we consider the journey to the coast of Tyre and Sidon as an appendix to the former, we may (according to *our scheme*) assign near *eight months* to that *grand tour* of *our Lord*, in which he followed *the twelve*, which might make it convenient to dispatch that in which he followed *the seventy* in proportionably less time: And I believe, that, if we consider Galilee not to have been larger than *three* or *four* of our *western counties*, we shall more easily acquiesce in the competency of *the time* assigned to these visits to it.

mistakes, as I have been obliged here to point out, it tends to give us an *humbling idea* of the *imperfections* of the *human mind* in its present state; and consequently, we may learn from it *two* of the most important *lessons* that can be imagined in social life;—a caution, lest we assert our own opinions with too *dogmatical* an air;—and a care to avoid such *petulancy* in censuring the mistakes of others, as if we thought none but *the weakest* and most contemptible of mankind were capable of being *misled* by the specious appearances of some inconclusive arguments; and I will venture to say, that, if Sir Isaac Newton's error in the *order of the Harmony* teach us this *candour*, it will be a much greater benefit to us, than if he had placed every circumstance relating to it beyond all possibility of farther dispute.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE PRECEDING DISSERTATION.

I NEVER had, nor never took, an opportunity of looking into *Dupin's Life of Christ*, till about a year ago, long after the publication of the *second edition* of my *Paraphrase on the Evangelists;* but then I found, to my agreeable surprise, a more perfect *agreement* between his *scheme of the Harmony* and mine, than I expected any where to have met with, and particularly in the story of the *resurrection.*

Of the 203 sections, into which I have divided the *Evangelists*, we *differ* only in the *order* of 29; and, as several of these are inseparably connected, there are only, on the whole, *nine* stories or discourses, in which there is *a variety* in our order.

The *first*, sect. 12, The *wise men's* visit to Christ, which he places before the *presentation*, sect. 11.

The *second*, sect. 37—43, Matthew's account of *the Sermon on the mount*, which he supposes to have been coincident with that in Luke, sect. 53, 54, which I consider as *a repetition* of it.

The *third*, sect. 69, 70, The stilling the *tempest*, and dispossessing *Legion*, which he places before the *calling of Matthew*, and immediately after sect. 36.

The *fourth*, sect. 96, *Christ's reproving John* for an instance of the narrowness of his spirit, which, as a similar and undetermined fact, he subjoins to sect. 93, *Christ's checking* the ambition of *his disciples.*

The *fifth*, sect. 106, The *return* of *the seventy*, which he connects with the story of their *mission*, sect. 97.

The *sixth*, sect. 118, *Christ's* urging the necessity of *striving for heaven*, &c. which he strangely introduces between sect. 154 and 158.

The *seventh*, The discourses and facts, sect. 126—135, which he scatters promiscuously after sect. 105, and elsewhere.

The *eighth*, sect. 170, The intimation of *Judas's treachery, the Eucharist*, sect. 172.

And the *last*, sect. 181, The warning Christ gave of *Peter's denying him*, which he joins with sect. 171, though I take them to be *two different predictions* of the same event.

The reader may see my reasons for the *order* in which I have placed most of these sections, in the *notes* upon them; but I cannot forbear thinking, that such a *coincidence* in all the rest, where the one could not write from the other, is a strong presumption in favour of both.

NUMBER II.

A DISSERTATION

On the Inspiration of the New Testament, as proved from the facts recorded in the Historical Books of it.

NOTHING can be more evident, than that a firm and cordial belief of the INSPIRATION of the *sacred scripture* is of the highest moment, not only to the edification and peace of the church, but in a great measure to its very existence; for, if this be given up, the authority of the revelation is enervated, and its use destroyed; the star which is to direct our course is clouded, our compass is broke to pieces, and we are left to make the voyage of life, in sad uncertainty, amidst a thousand rocks, and shelves, and quicksands. I hope therefore, I may perform a service acceptable to God and my Christian brethren, while I endeavour, as plainly and as briefly as I can, to place some *leading proofs of it* in a convincing view; and I undertake the task the more willingly, as in the *Preface* to the *first volume* of this work, I laid myself under an obligation (several years ago) to attempt something of this kind, and have often been reminded of it by persons for whom I have the highest regard.

I then proposed to handle the subject in a few *sermons*, to be added to *those*, long since published, on *the evidences of the gospel*. But, on a review of that particular connection, which the argument I am here to pursue has with the *History* of the *New Testament*, I apprehended, it could no where appear better, than at the end of my *Exposition* on the books which contain it. The reader will, I hope, recollect, that, in the *sermons* just now mentioned, I have endeavoured to demonstrate *the truth* of *that history*; and every year convinces me more and more of the unanswerable force of the evidence there displayed. It is with great pleasure that I reflect on the *divine blessing*, which hath seemed to attend those discourses; and it is a great encouragement to me to hope, that what I am now to offer may be a means of establishing some of my readers in that *regard to the sacred oracles*, which will be their *best preservative* against the errors, and the vices, of that licentious age in which Providence hath cast our lot, whereby our fidelity and our zeal are brought to *a trial*, which few ages but *those of martyrdom* could have afforded.

It will be my business, *first*, to state *the nature* of INSPIRATION in general, and of *that kind of it*, which (as I apprehend) we

we are to ascribe to the *New Testament:* I shall then prove, that it was undoubtedly *written by such inspiration;* and after this, I shall briefly hint at *the influence*, which this important truth ought always to have upon *our temper* and *conduct;* by inforcing which, I apprehend, I shall take the best method to promote *a growing persuasion* of the truth I am labouring to establish.

I will only premise, That I do not intend this, as a *full discussion* of the subject, but only as such a *compendious view* of the *chief proofs*, as may suit the place in which it stands, and as may, from the easiest and plainest principles, give *rational satisfaction* to the minds of *common Christians*, who have not leisure, nor perhaps ability, to enter into all the niceties of *theological* and *scholastical* controversy.

I. I shall state *the nature* of INSPIRATION, and of *that kind of it*, which we are to ascribe to the *New Testament.*

In this I shall be more particular, as I apprehend, the want of a sufficient accuracy here has occasioned some confusion in the reasoning of several worthy persons, who have treated this important subject more largely, than I must here allow myself to do. I shall not, however, criticise on their account of the matter, but plainly lay down what seems to me intelligible, right and safe.

By INSPIRATION in general, I would be understood to mean, "Any supernatural influence of God upon the mind of a rational creature, whereby it is formed to any degree of intellectual improvement, beyond what it would, at that time, and in those circumstances, have attained in a natural way, that is, by the usual exercise of its faculties, unassisted by any special divine interposition." Thus, if a man were instantaneously enabled to *speak a language* which he had *never learned*, how possible soever it might have been for him to have obtained an equal readiness in it by degrees, I believe few would scruple to say, that he owed his acquaintance with it to a *divine inspiration;* or, if he gave a true and exact *account of what was doing at a distance*, and published a particular relation of what he neither saw nor heard, as some of the *prophets did*, all the world would own, (if the affair were too complex, and the account too circumstantial, to be the result of a lucky guess,) that he must be *inspired* with the knowledge of it, though another account equally exact, given by a person on the spot, would be ascribed to no *inspiration* at all.

But of this *supernatural influence* on the minds of men, forming them to such extraordinary intellectual improvements and abilities, there are *various sorts* and *degrees*, which it will be of importance for us accurately to distinguish from each other.

If a person be *discoursing* either in *word* or *writing*, and God do *miraculously* watch over his mind, and, *however secretly*, direct it in such a manner, as to keep him *more secure from error* in what he speaks or writes, than he could have been merely by the

the natural exercise of his faculties, I should say, he was *inspired*, even though there should be no extraordinary marks of high genius in the work, or even though another person, with a stronger memory, or relating a fact more immediately after it happened, might naturally have recounted it with equal exactness. Yet still, if there was *in this case* any thing *miraculous*, we must, on the principles above, allow *an inspiration*; and I would call this, to distinguish it from other and higher degrees, *an inspiration of superintendency*.

If this influence should act in such a degree, as *absolutely to exclude all mixture of error* in a declaration of doctrines or facts so superintended, we might then call it *a plenary superintending inspiration*, or, as I would choose for popular use to express myself in this discourse, *a full inspiration*.

Now it will from hence follow, (and I desire that it may be seriously attended to,) that *a book*, the contents of which are entirely true, may be said to be *written* by *a full inspiration*, even though it contain many things which the author might have known and recorded merely by the use of his natural faculties, if there be others which he did not so well know, or could not without miraculous assistance have so exactly recollected; or if, on the whole, *a freedom from all error* would not in fact have been found, unless God had thus *superintended* or watched over his mind and pen. And, in regard to such a production, it would be altogether impertinent and insignificant to inquire, how far did natural memory or natural reason operate, and in what particular facts or doctrines did supernatural agency prevail: It is enough, if I know that what the author says or writes is *true*, though I know not particularly how he came by this or that truth: for my obligation to receive it arises from its being *known truth*, and not merely from its being made known this or that way.— And should God miraculously assure me, that any particular writing contained *nothing but the truth*; and should he at the same time tell me, it had been drawn up without any miraculous assistance at all, though I could not then call it *inspired*, I should be as much obliged to receive and submit to it on its being thus *attested* by God, as if every single word had been immediately *dictated* by him.

It will farther follow from what is said above, that *a book* may be *written* by such *full inspiration* as I have described, though, the author being left to the choice of his own words, phrases, and manner*, there may be *some imperfection* in the *style* and *method*, provided the whole contents of it are *true*: if the subject be *so important*, as to make it consistent with the divine wisdom miraculously to interpose, to preserve *an entire credibility* as to the exact truth of facts recorded, and doctrines delivered as divine.

* It is very evident, that the learned Maimonides thought this to be the case with regard to *the prophets*, though I think it least of all to be apprehended in such oracles. See *Maimon, Mor. Nev. lib.* ii. *cap.* 29.

divine. If indeed God were represented as declaring such a book to be *intended* by him as an *exact standard* for *logic, oratory,* or *poetry,* every apparent defect in either would be an internal objection against it. But if it be represented only as *intended* to teach us *truth,* in order to its having a proper influence on our temper and actions, *such defects* would no more warrant or excuse our rejecting its authority, than the want of a ready utterance or a musical voice would excuse our disregard to a person, who should bring us competent evidence of his being a messenger from God to us.

I have been more particular in stating *this kind of inspiration,* because it is *that* which I shall endeavour to assert to the *sacred books* of the *New Testament,* and this without any exception or limitation, as they came out of the hands of the *apostles:* though I allow it is possible they may, in this or that *particular copy,* and in some minuter instances which now perhaps affect *all our remaining copies,* have *suffered something* by the injuries of *time,* or the negligence of *transcribers,* as well as *printers:* Which, that they have in some particulars suffered, is as notorious a fact, as that there is a *written* or a *printed* copy of them in the world; yet is at the same time a fact which no man of common sense or honesty can seriously urge against their authority.

Though it be the main point in my view, to prove that the *New Testament* is written under *that kind of inspiration* which I have been explaining, I must nevertheless beg leave to mention *two other kinds,* of which *divines* often speak, and which do also in a considerable degree belong to *many parts of scripture,* though I think it neither expedient, material, nor safe, to assert that they run through the whole of it: I mean, *an inspiration* of *elevation,* and of *suggestion.*

The *former* (as its name plainly intimates) prevails, where the *faculties,* though they act in a regular, and, as it seems, a common manner, are nevertheless *elevated* or raised to some extraordinary degree, so that the *performance* is more truly *sublime, noble,* and *pathetic,* than what would have been produced merely by the force of a man's natural genius. As for the *particular degree* of the *divine agency,* where there is indeed something of *this inspiration,* perhaps neither the person that is under it, nor any other creature, may be able confidently to pronounce concerning it. Perhaps, nothing less penetrating than the eye of God himself, may be able universally to distinguish *that narrow line* which divides what is *natural* from what is *supernatural,* in all the productions and powers of imagination, reasoning, and language, or in the effects and powers of memory under the former head. It is *a curiosity,* in the minute particulars of which we are not at all concerned; as it is *the same God which,* whether naturally or miraculously, *worketh all and in all,* (1 Cor. xii. 9.) But if any excellency in the performance itself can speak it to be *more than human,* productions of this sort are to be found in

scripture;

scripture; and the rank and education of some of the *sacred penmen* render the hand of God peculiarly conspicuous in the sublimity and lustre of their writings. What *the gifts of the Spirit* may in every age of the church have done, by operations of this kind, we know not. And I think it would be presumptuous absolutely to deny, that God might act in some extraordinary degree on some of the *heathen writers*, to produce those glorious works of antiquity which have been, under the direction of his Providence, so efficacious on the one hand to transmit the *evidences* of *divine revelation*, and on the other to illustrate the *necessity* of it: In consequence of which I cannot forbear saying by the way, that I think they who are intimately acquainted with them, are of all men upon earth *the most inexcusable* in rejecting *Christianity*. But our inability to mark out *the exact boundaries* between nature and an extraordinary divine agency, is not much to be regretted; since it does not appear to be the design of Providence, by such *elevations* of sentiment, style, and manner, by any means to *bear testimony* to the person adorned with them, as a messenger sent to speak in his name; which may as effectually be done in the plainest and simplest forms of expression, without any thing which looks like the heightenings of art, or the sparklings of an extraordinary genius.

The *other*, which *divines* have called *immediate suggestion*, is the highest and most extraordinary kind of *inspiration*, and takes place when the use of our faculties is superseded, and God does as it were *speak directly* to the mind; *making such discoveries to it* as it could not otherwise have obtained, and *dictating the very words* in which these discoveries are to be communicated to others: So that a person, in what he writes from hence, is no other than, first, *the auditor*, and then (if I may be allowed the expression) *the secretary of God;* as *John* was of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, when he wrote from his sacred lips *the seven epistles* to the *Asiatic churches*. And it is, no doubt, to an *inspiration of this kind* that the book of *the Revelation* owes its original.

It is evident from the definitions above, that there may be a *full superintendency* where neither of the *latter kinds of inspiration* (of *elevation* or *suggestion*) take place: But I think we must necessarily allow, that *an inspiration of suggestion*, so far as it goes, must also imply *a full superintendency* in recording the *history* of what has been seen or heard in any *prophetic vision*, when it is necessary to make a report of it. For as it would, on the one hand, be impious to imagine, that the blessed God would *dictate a falsehood* to any of his creatures; so neither can we suppose it consistent with the divine wisdom, to suffer *the prophet*, through infirmity, to *err in delivering a message* with which he had expressly charged him; and which would be given in vain, so far as there was a failure in the exact delivery of it.

Besides *the last book* of the *New Testament*, I mean *the Revelation*, which I have already mentioned in this view, it seems evident to me that some *other parts* of it were given by *such a suggestion;*

gestion; seeing there are so many *predictions* interspersed, and so many *mysteries* revealed, which lay entirely *beyond the ken* of any *human*, or perhaps *angelic* mind. But that this is applicable to *all the history* of it, or to all things contained in its *epistolary parts*, I choose not to assert. For as it cannot be necessary to its *entire credibility*, (which nothing can more effectually secure than *a full superintendency,)* it would subject us to *many difficulties*, which have been so forcibly urged by others, that it is not necessary for me here to repeat them. But I am well assured, that the apparent insufficiency of the *answers* which have been returned to these objections, by some very sincere, but I think in this instance, less judicious *defenders of scripture*, has led some people to conclude, that the scripture was *not inspired* at all; as if it had been on both sides agreed, that an universal *suggestion* was the only kind of *inspiration* worth contending about. The consequence of this hath been, that such as are dissatisfied with the arguments which *these defenders* of the divine authority of the scripture insist upon, read the *scriptures*, (if they read them at all,) not to learn their authentic dictates, but to try the sentiments contained in them by the touch-stone of *their own reason*, and to separate what that shall allow to be right from what it presumptuously concludes to be wrong. And this *boasted standard* has been so very defective, that on this mistaken notion they have not only *rejected* many of the most vital truths of *Christianity*, but even some essential principles of *natural religion*. And thus they have in effect *annihilated the Christian revelation*, at the very same time that they have acknowledged the *historical truth of the facts* on which it is built. This is the body of men, that have affected to call themselves *cautious believers;* but their character is so admirably well described under that of Agrippa, by my honoured friend Dr. Watts, in his little treatise called *the Redeemer and Sanctifier*, that it may be sufficient here to have hinted it thus briefly; as the reason, why out of regard to them as well as others, I have resumed the subject of *inspiration*, and endeavoured to place it in what I do in my conscience apprehend to be both a safe and a rational light.

That I may remedy, so far as God shall enable me to do it, the great and destructive evil I have just been mentioning, and may establish in the minds of Christians a due regard to the *sacred oracles* of eternal truth, I shall now proceed to the *second part* of this discourse: In which,

II. I am to shew, how evidently the *full inspiration* of the *New Testament*, in the sense stated above, follows from the acknowledged *truth* of the *history* which it contains, in all its leading and most important facts.

But before I proceed to the discussion of the matter, I must beg leave to observe, that though *this* is what I apprehend to be *the grand argument*, and that which may most properly be connected

nected with an *exposition* of the *historical books*, I am very far from slighting those *other arguments* which fall not so directly in my way here.

I greatly revere the *testimony* of the primitive *Christian writers*, not only to the *real existence* of the *sacred books* in those early ages, but also to their *divine original:* Their persuasion of which most evidently appears from the veneration with which they speak of them, even while *miraculous gifts* remained in the church; and consequently, an exact attendance to *a written rule* might seem less absolutely necessary, and the authority of *inferior teachers* might approach nearer to that of the *apostles*. I believe every candid reader will acknowledge, that nothing can be objected to many strong passages in Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus Antiochenus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and some other ancient writers he has mentioned that are now lost. It is needless to produce them here, after those valuable specimens of them which Dr. Whitby and Mons. du Pin have given; and especially considering what my learned friend Dr. Lardner has with so much industry and accuracy of judgment collected on this head in the *second part* of his *Credibility of the Gospel History*. I shall therefore content myself with observing here, that several of the most learned and considerable of *these ancients* speak of *this veneration* for the sacred writings of the *New Testament*, not as the result of their own private judgment, but as that in which *all the churches* were unanimously agreed *.

The *internal characters* of *divine inspiration*, with which every page of the New Testament abounds, do also deserve our attentive notice; and render the *book itself*, if considered as detached from all *external evidence* whatsoever, a compendious demonstration of its own *sacred original*, and consequently of the certainty of that religion which it teaches. The excellency of its doctrines, the spirituality and elevation of its design, the majesty and simplicity of its style, the agreement of its parts in the most unsuspicious manner, with its more than human efficacy on the hearts and consciences of men, do all concur to give us a very high

* Thus Origen says, (*Philocal. cap.* xii. p. 41,) Δει σε,——ως πιςῷ παραδεξασθαι, οτι θεοπνευςοι εισιν. "That, if a man would not confess himself to be an *infidel*, he must admit the *inspiration* of the *scriptures:*" And he elsewhere places the *gospels* in the number of writings, "which were received as divine by all the churches of God, and were the elements, or first principles, of the church's faith: Εν πασαις εκκλησιαις Θεω πεπιςευμενων ειναι Θειων,——Στοιχεια της πιςεως της εκκλησιας.——Tertullian also lays it down as a fundamental principle in disputing with *heretics*, "That the truth of doctrines is to be determined by *scripture;*" for the question has evidently the force of a strong negation: *Aliunde scilicet loqui possunt de rebus fidei, nisi ex litteris fidei?* (*de Præscript. Hæret. cap.* xv.—) And Eusebius quotes a much more ancient writer than himself, (*Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 28,) who calls the *scripture*, πιςεως αρχαιας κανονα, "the rule of ancient faith;" and who afterwards speaking of *heretics*, declares, "That, if they denied the *scriptures* to be divinely inspired, they were *infidels*." The expression is remarkable; but, having transcribed it in Vol. VI. p. 27, note i, I shall not insert it here.

high idea of the New Testament: And I am persuaded, that the wiser and better any man is, and the more familiarly he converses with these *unequalled books*, the more will he be struck with *this evidence*. But these things in the general are better felt than expressed, and several of the arguments arise not from particular passages, but from the general tenor of the books; and consequently they cannot be judged of but by a serious and attentive perusal.

Dismissing therefore these topics, not with neglect but with the sincerest expressions of just and high veneration, I now proceed to that *grand proof* of the *inspiration* of the New Testament, which is derived from the *credibility of its leading facts*; which having so fully illustrated in the *sermons* referred to above, I think I have a just title to assume as the foundation of what farther reasonings may occur.

Admitting *this great principle*, it is undeniably certain,—That *Jesus of Nazareth* was a most extraordinary person:—That after having been *foretold* by many *prophets* in distant periods of time he was at length, agreeably to the repeated declaration of an *angel*, first to a *priest* ministring at the golden altar in the temple, and then to his *mother*, *conceived* by *a virgin* of David's family: ——That his *birth* was proclaimed by a choir of *angels*, who celebrated it in celestial anthems, as the foundation of *peace on earth*, and the most glorious display of divine *benevolence to men*:——That before his public appearance, *a person* greater than any of the prophets, and whose birth had also been foretold by an angel, was *sent to prepare his way*:——That, on his being *baptized*, he was anointed with a wonderful effusion of the *Spirit*, poured down upon him by a visible symbol; and that the efficacy of this sacred agent, continually residing in him, was apparent throughout the whole course of his ministry, not only in the unspotted *sanctity of his life*, amidst a thousand most violent temptations, and in the bright assemblage of *virtues* and *graces* which shone in it, with a lustre before unknown, and since absolutely unparalleled; but also in a multitude of various *works* of wonder and mercy, which he *miraculously* wrought on those whose *diseases* were of the most desperate and incurable nature, and even on *the dead*, whom that almighty voice of his, which had *driven out* the fiercest *infernal spirits*, and *calmed* the rage of *tempests*, did with serene majesty *awaken into life*, as from a slumber.——It is also on the same foundation certain, That this illustrious person, having by the malice of his enemies been most unjustly and cruelly *put to death*, did *on the third day arise from the dead*:——And that, after having given to *his disciples* the most abundant *proofs* of that important fact, he at length *ascended to heaven* gradually *in their sight*; *angels appearing* to assure them, he should as visibly *descend from thence* to the universal *judgment*, the administration of which he had declared to be *committed to him*.

I must

I must freely declare, that had I been an entire stranger to the sacred history, and proceeded no farther in it than this, (supposing me firmly to have *believed* all these wonderful things, though delivered in the shortest *abstract* that could have been made of them,) I should readily have concluded, that this extraordinary person, being *sent* (as it plainly appears from the history that he was) *with a divine revelation* for the benefit of all nations and of all ages, had taken care to leave some *authentic records* of the doctrine which he taught. And if I had farther found, that he had left no such records written by himself, I should naturally have concluded, that he took effectual care that some of *his followers* should be enabled to *deliver down to posterity* the system of religion which he taught in the most accurate manner; with all such extraordinary *assistance from God* as the nature of the subject required, in order to rendering their accounts exact. And I believe every reasonable man would draw this inference; because it is very apparent that the *great end* of this vast and astonishing *apparatus*, (for vast and astonishing it would appear, if what relates to *Jesus alone* were taken into the survey,) must in the nature of things be *frustrated*, if no such *records* were provided; it being morally impossible that *unwritten tradition* should convey a system of religion pure and uncorrupted, even to the next generation? and much more, that it should so convey it to the end of time. And it would seem, so far as we can judge, by no means worthy the divine wisdom to suffer the good effects of such a great and noble plan to be lost for want of so easy an expedient; especially since men of the age and country in which these things happened, were not only blessed with the use of *letters*, but were remarkable for their application to them, and for great proficiency in various branches of learning. And if I should not only have an *abstract* of this *history of Jesus*, which I judged *credible*, but should also be so happy as to have the *Four Gospels* in my hand, with convincing evidences of their being genuine, (which we here suppose,) I should on these principles assuredly argue, That not only the *leading facts*, but likewise the system of *doctrines* and *discourses* delivered in them, might entirely be depended upon: Nor could I conceive *the truth* of such doctrines and discourses to be separable from the general truth of the leading facts referred to above; having (as I here suppose) *proper evidences* to convince me, that *the penmen of these books* were the persons by whom the memory of these events was to be delivered down to posterity; which is a farther principle that none of common sense and modesty can pretend to contest; none appearing as their competitors whose pretensions are worthy to be named.

But my apprehension of the full authenticness and *credibility* of *these writers* would, on the supposition I am here making, greatly increase, as I proceeded to that excellent and useful book which the good providence of God has now given me an opportunity

tunity of illustrating; *the Acts of the holy Apostles;* since I learn from thence, that, in a very few days after the *ascension* of Jesus into heaven, *the Spirit of God* was, according to his promise, *poured out* upon his *apostles* in an abundant manner, attended with the visible appearance of a lambent *celestial flame;* and that, in consequence of this amazing unction, the poor *fishermen* of Galilee, and their companions, were in a moment *enabled to speak,* with the greatest readiness and propriety, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Coptic, Persic, and a variety of *other languages,* the first rudiments of which they had never learnt, and also to perform *all kinds of miracles,* equal to those of *their master,* and in some circumstances superior to them. My veneration for the *writings of these men* (and I here suppose, I know those of the *New Testament* to be so,) must be unparalleled, when I think *who* and *what* they were; and I am so struck with this plain, but divinely powerful argument, that I must entreat my reader to review with me, a little more particularly, some of the *actions* and *circumstances* of these holy men, to whose *writings* I am labouring to conciliate his unreserved regard.

Let them *all* be considered, as *preaching the gospel* in that extraordinary manner on the *day of Pentecost,* and a few days after when some of their companions had been seized and threatened by the *Sanhedrim,* as anointed again with such an *effusion of the Spirit,* as *shook the very house* in which they were, and inspired them *all at once* with the same sublime *hymn of praise.* Let them be considered, as afterwards *led out of the prison by an angel,* and commanded by him *to go and preach* the gospel *in the temple,* under the remarkable phraseology of *the words of this life,* as if the whole life and happiness of the human race depended on their knowing and receiving it. Nor let us here forget that *extraordinary power,* common to *all the apostles,* of communicating the *miraculous gifts of the Spirit* by the *imposition of their hands.* Had we nothing *particular* to say of *any one,* more than these grand things which we hear of *them all,* it must surely command our reverence to *these writings,* and set them at a vast distance from any of merely human original.

But through the singular providence of God it hath so happened, that we have *the most particular history* of the lives of *those apostles,* to whose *writings* we are generally most indebted; I mean, John, Peter, and Paul.

With respect to John we know, that, besides the concern he had in the *cure of the lame man,* he was favoured with the *visions of God* in the *Isle of Patmos,* where *our Lord,* after an abode of more than half a century on the throne of his glory *at his Father's right hand;* did him the unequalled honour to use him as his *amanuensis* or *secretary,* expressly dictating to him *the letters* he was pleased to send *to the seven churches in Asia.* How easily then may we suppose him so to have presided over his *other writings,* as to have secured him from mistakes in them!

Consider Peter, as striking Ananias and Sapphira dead with a word;

word; as curing, by the like powerful word, one *cripple* at Jerusalem and another at Lydda, and calling back Dorcas even *from the dead.* Let us view him in that grand circumstance, of being *marked out* so particularly *by an angel to Cornelius*, and sent to him as the oracle of God himself, from whom that worthy and honourable person was to *hear words, by which he and all his house should be saved*; and after this let us view him, as once more *delivered out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews*, by an *angel*, who struck off his chains, and opened the doors of his prison *the very night* before he was to have been executed. And let any one, with these particulars in his eye, added to the foregoing in which he shared with all his brethren, say, what more could be necessary to prove *the divine inspiration* of what he taught, so far as *inspiration* was requisite to render it *entirely authentic*; or let any one farther say, upon what imaginable pretence the authority of *his writings* can be denied, if that of *his preaching be granted.*

And to mention no more, let Paul, that great *scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven*, to whose pen we owe so many invaluable *epistles* be considered in the same view; and let us endeavour to impress our minds with the various scenes through which we know he passed, and the distinguished favours with which *his master* honoured him, that we may judge, how we are to receive the instructions of his pen. Let us therefore think of him, as so *miraculously called* by the voice of Christ to the profession of *his gospel*, when he was *persecuting it even to the death*; as receiving a full and distinct *revelation* of that glorious, but to him quite unknown *gospel*, by the *immediate inspiration* of its divine author, which is a fact he expressly witnesses, and in which he could not possibly be mistaken. Think of the lustre of *those astonishing works* which shone round him wherever he went, and of those wrought in his favour, which shewed him so eminently the care of Heaven: *dæmons* ejected; *distempers* cured, sometimes *with a touch*, and sometimes *without*, by a garment sent from him to the patient; *his motions* guided from place to place by a divine oracle; *Elymas struck blind* for opposing him; *his hands loosed* by an earthquake; *his strength* and vigour instantaneously *restored*, when the rage of the mutable and barbarous populace at Lystra had *stoned him* and left him for dead; and to add no more, *his safety in a shipwreck*, with that of *near three hundred more* in the same vessel *for his sake*, promised by *an angel*, and accomplished *without the loss of a single person*, when they had expected nothing but an universal ruin. Let us, I say, think of Paul in these circumstances; and with these facts full in our view, let us judge, whether it is at all probable, yea whether it be morally possible, that a man, sent out and attended with such credentials as these, should be so *left of God*, amidst all these tokens of his constant care, as to mingle error with *sound doctrine*, and his own fancies with the *divine revelations*, which we are sure he received; or whether, if he were *not left* to such effects of human

frailty

frailty *in his preaching*, but might have been regarded by his hearers with entire credit, he would be *left* to them *in those writings*, by which he was (as it were) to preach to all future generations of men from one end of the world to the other, and by which, *being dead, he yet speaketh*, in all languages, and to all Christian assemblies.

I cannot forbear thinking *this plain argument*, so well adapted to popular use, *abundantly sufficient* to carry conviction to every candid mind, in proportion to the degree of its attention and penetration. And I am almost afraid, that some should think I have bestowed an unnecessary labour, thus particularly to state a matter, which hath such a flood of light poured in upon it from almost every page of the sacred story. But I have been obliged, in the course of this exposition, to meditate much on these facts; and under the deep impression I could not but *speak*, as *out of the fullness of my heart.*

Yet after all I have already said, I should be very unjust to *this argument*, if I did not endeavour to represent to my reader, how much it is *strengthened* on the one hand by the express and comprehensive *promises* which *our Redeemer* made to his *apostles*, and on the other by the *peculiar language* in which the *apostles* themselves speak of their *preaching* and *writings*, and the *high regard* they challenge to each; a regard, which nothing could justify them in demanding, but a consciousness that they were indeed *under a full inspiration.*

The *promises* of our Lord Jesus Christ must undoubtedly have a very great weight with all that have reflected on that indisputable *testimony*, which *God himself* bore to him in numberless instances. And therefore, though they are so very well known, I must beg leave not only to *refer to them*, but to *recite* the chief of them at large; and I entreat the reader to consider, how he can reconcile them with an apprehension, that our Lord Jesus Christ did at the same time intend to *leave the persons* to whom he made such promises, *liable to mistake* both in facts and doctrines, and, being deceived themselves, to *mislead such* as should depend upon their testimony, where they professed themselves to be thoroughly informed.

In that copious and excellent discourse, which *our Lord* addressed to the *apostles*, just before he quitted *the guest chamber* to go to the *garden of Gethsemane*, (that is, but a few hours before his death,) *the grand consolation* he urges to his sorrowful disciples is this, that he *would send his spirit upon them.* The donation of which *Spirit* is represented, as *the first fruits of Christ's intercession*, when after so long an absence, and such terrible sufferings, he should be restored to his Father's embraces. This is spoken of as *the first petition* preferred by him, and *the first favour* granted to his church for his sake; John xiv. 16.) *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may*

may abide with you for ever. Yea, Christ declares, and he could not be mistaken in it, that the *agency of this Spirit* should so abundantly counter-balance, all the advantages they received from *his bodily presence*, that, strong as their affection to him was, they would in that view have reason to rejoice in his leaving them: (John xvi. 7.) *I tell you the truth*, that is, I say what may be depended upon as a most important certainty, (and very important indeed such a representation was;) *it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* Now from these expressions, were they alone, I think we might probably infer, that the apostles, after having received the Spirit, would be in no more danger of erring in their writings, than they would have been, if *Jesus himself*, had been always near them, to inform them concerning any fact or doctrine, of which they might have occasion to speak.

This is farther confirmed by the title which is given him no less than *thrice* in this discourse, *the Spirit of truth*, almost in a breath with these great and weighty circumstances, that he should *abide with them for ever*; (John xiv. 16, 17.) that he should *guide them into all truth*; that he should *teach them all things*, yea *and shew them things to come*; (John xvi. 13,) which must surely secure them from any *danger of erring* in relating things that were past. But, lest any should be perverse enough to dispute the consequence, our Lord particularly mentions this effect of *the Spirit's operation*, that they should thereby be fitted to *bear a testimsny to him*, as those who had long been conversant with him, and whose memories were miraculously assisted in recollecting those discourses, which they had heard from him: (John xv. 26, 27). *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also* (being so assisted) *shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.* And again (John xiv. 26,) *The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Soon after this our Lord, on the very day in which he rose from the dead, in a dependance on the aids of this promised Spirit, gives them a commission, which nothing but *its plenary inspiration* could have answered, or have qualified them to fulfil; for coming to them, he declares, (John xx. 21.) *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you: And* upon this *he breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained;* which, whether it signifies a power of inflicting and removing *miraculous punishments* or of authoritatively declaring that sins were in particular instances forgiven or retained, must either suppose such a constant presence of Christ with them, as it is hard, or rather impossible, to reconcile with supposing them to err

err in what they wrote for the instruction of the church in succeeding ages.

These are the grand passages, on which I rest this part of the argument; yet I think, I ought not to omit those, in which Christ promises them such *extraordinary assistance of the Spirit*, while defending his cause in the presence of magistrates; and it is the more proper to mention them, as the language in which they are made is so remarkable. On this occasion then he tells them, (Mat. x. 20.) *When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. for it shall be given you in the same hour what ye shall speak. for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.* May we not therefore on the same principles conclude, that, when they were to write for the use of all future generations of christians, it was not so much *they who wrote as the Spirit of the Father*, who in effect *wrote by them*, and as it were dictated to them? For the occasion will surely appear as important in one instance as in the other; or rather much more important in the latter than in the former, as an *error in their writings* would have a much more extensive and lasting influence, than *a slip of their tongues* in a transient pleading before a magistrate. Nay, to give this argument the greatest possible weight, we find that the same promise was made, almost in the very same words, (Luke xii. 11, 12.) to persons in the dignity of their office *inferior to the apostles;* I mean, to the seventy, which might have intitled their writings to such a regard, as I am now labouring to engage to those of their superiors.

I shall only farther remind the reader, that our Lord, when just ascending to heaven, refers to *that effusion of Spirit* which was quickly after to happen, even *before they departed from Jerusalem*, as the *æra*, from whence the grand accomplishment of the promises relating to the *aids of the Spirit* was to be dated. (See Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, 5. And, as all the *apostolical writings* which now remain were written several years after that event, it plainly proves, they lie within the period, in which they were to expect all the assurance which *these promises* import.

The most plausible *objection*, which can be urged against the application of these promises to the matter now before us, is this: "That *these promises* only refer to the *supernatural assistance*, granted to the apostles on great and pressing occasions; but that they might easily, *without such assistance*, have written *a true account* of the life and preaching of Christ, and of such other facts as they record, and consequently that *their historical writings* at least, how credible soever we suppose them, might be drawn up *without any inspiration at all.*"

To this I might reply, that if it be allowed that the apostles, in the books which we have been endeavouring to explain, *wrote the exact truth*, and that in *their epistles* they have made *a right* and unerring *representation* of the *revelation* with which they were charged, so that we may safely make their writings *a rule both of faith*

faith and practice, the remaining question would only be about the propriety of using the word *inspiration* when speaking of them; and therefore would, on the principles I have laid down above, be comparatively *of small importance*. Yet I think it easy, in that view of the question, to prove that these writings could not have been thus *entirely credible*, if they had not been written under such *a full inspiration of superintendency*, as is stated in the first part of this discourse.

I do indeed allow, and no candid man can dispute it, that *the penmen of the New Testament*, supposing them able to write at all, might merely by the natural exercise of their memory, under the direction of the common sense and reason of men, have given us *a plain, faithful*, and *very easy account* of many extraordinary scenes, to which they had been witnesses during the time they conversed with Jesus on earth, and in which they were active *after his ascension*. And I cannot forbear saying, that supposing the truth of the *grand leading facts*, (as that *Jesus of Nazareth* taught a doctrine confirmed by miracles, and was himself *raised from the dead*,) I should have esteemed such writings, supposing them merely *an honest account* of what such men must have known, to be beyond all comparison *the most valuable records of antiquity*. But, when these writings came to be perused, it is evident to me from the particular contents of them, that *honest and worthy men* would never have pretended to have *written in such a manner*, if they had not been conscious of *superior direction*, and extraordinary divine influence.

For *the historians* of whom we speak do not merely give us a very circumstantial account of actions, as what *journies* Christ made, what *miracles* he performed, in what manner he was received, where and how he *died*, and *rose again*, and *ascended into heaven*; but they do also, as we may reasonably expect they should, give us an account of *the doctrine he taught*, and indeed, if they had not done this, the knowledge of his story, amazing as it is, would have been but an unprofitable amusement to us. Nor do they content themselves with giving us *a short summary* of his doctrine, or a view of *the religion* he intended to introduce, as the general result of their having attended so long on his instructions; but they *presume to tell us his very words*. And here, they do not merely relate *some short saying*, the remarkable poignancy of which, or their propriety to the circumstances in which they were spoken, might have *struck the memory* with a peculiar force; but they insert *long discourses*, which he made on public occasions, though they do not pretend, that he left *any copies* of them, or that they themselves took from them *any written memoirs*, whatsoever; and it is worth our notice, that (besides the many *shorter sayings* and *replies* with which the *history* is interspersed) *near one half of the four gospels* is taken up with the insertion of *these discourses* *. Now

* If my computation does not deceive me, 93 of our 203 *sections* are taken up thus; and some of them are *long sections* too: and the *number of verses* contained in *these discourses*,

Now it was highly necessary, that, if these *speeches of the Lord* were recorded at all, they should be *recorded with great exactness;* for many of them relate to the *system of doctrines* which he came to teach, and others of them are *predictions of future events,* referring to a great variety of curious circumstances, where *a small mistake* might greatly have affected *the credit of the prediction,* and with it the cause of Christianity in general: so that *common prudence* would have taught the *apostles* to wave them, rather than pretend to deliver them to posterity, if they had not been sure they could have *done it exactly.*

But how could they have expected to have *done this,* merely by the natural strength of *their own memories,* unless we imagine each of them to be *a prodigy* in that respect, to which no one of them makes the least shadow of a pretence? It is well known, that several of *those speeches of Christ* which Matthew and John give us, (not now to mention the *other evangelists,*) contain *several pages,* and some of them cannot be deliberately and decently *read over* in less than *a quarter of an hour.* Now I believe, if my reader would make the experiment on *any thing of that length* which he read or heard *yesterday,* or even on *one* of those *discourses of Christ,* though perhaps he has read or heard it *an hundred times,* he would find, on a careful examination, many things would probably be *omitted;* many *transposed;* many expressed in *a different manner;* and were he to *write a copy* of such a discourse *from his memory,* and then critically to *compare it with the original,* he would find *the sense,* in many particulars where there was some general resemblance, *more different* than he could perhaps have imagined; and *variations,* which at first seemed but *inconsiderable,* would appear *greatly to affect the sense,* when they came to be more nicely renewed. If *this* would so probably be *the case* with ninety-nine out of a hundred of mankind, (and I certainly speak within compass,) when a discourse to be repeated had been delivered *but a day* or an *hour* before, what could be expected from the *apostles* with an interval of *so many years,* and especially from John, who has, in proportion to the length of his gospel, recorded *more speeches* than any of the rest, and wrote them (if we may credit the most authentic tradition,) *more than half a century* after *our Lord's* ascension?

This argument would have great weight, with relation to a man whose *life* was ever so *peaceful,* and his affairs contracted in the narrowest sphere: But it will be greatly strengthened, when we come to consider *the multitude* and *variety* of scenes, and those too *the most interesting* that can be imagined, through which the *apostles* passed. When we consider all their labours, and their cares; the journies they were continually taking; the novelty of objects perpetually surrounding them; and, above all, the persecutions and dangers to which they were daily exposed; and the strong

courses, to that of *the whole,* is as about 1700 to 3779, which is the *number of verses* in the *four gospels.*

strong manner in which the mind is struck, and the memory of past circumstances erased, by such occurrences; I cannot conceive that any reader will be so unreasonable, as to imagine these things could have been *written with any exactness* by the *apostles*, if they had not been *miraculously assisted* in recording them. And what is particularly mentioned by *the last of these writers*, of the promised agency of *the Spirit* to *bring to their remembrance all things* they had heard from *Christ* himself, (John xiv. 26,) must I think incontestably prove that this was *one purpose* for which *the Spirit was given*; and therefore, we may be sure that it was *a purpose* for which *it was needed*.

I hope I have by this time convinced my reader, that it is *agreeable* to the other circumstances of the *apostles'* story, and to the *promises* which *our Lord* so largely and so frequently made to them, (and the *frequent repetition* of the *promise* strongly intimates the *importance* of it,) to suppose that they were indeed favoured with *a full inspiration* in their writings.

But, to complete the argument, it must be observed, That *these holy men* (for such the history plainly shews them to have been) assume to themselves *such an authority*, and speak of their own discourses and writings in *such peculiar language*, as nothing but a consciousness of *such inspiration* could warrant, or even excuse.

To make us duly sensible of the force of this argument, let us hear Paul, Peter, and John, and we shall find the remark *applicable to them all*; though, as St. Paul wrote much more than *either of the latter*, we may naturally expect to find the most frequent instances of it in his writings.

When the apostle Paul had taken notice to the Corinthians, that the subject of his preaching was *the wisdom of God in a mystery*, and related to things which transcended the sense and imagination of men, he adds, (1 Cor. ii. 10.) *But God hath revealed them to us by the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God:* And again, (ver. 12,) *We have received, not the Spirit of the world*, so as to act in that artful way which a regard to secular advantages dictates; *but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.* Now, it is natural to conclude from hence, that *this knowledge* being given them not merely or chiefly *for themselves*, but *for the church*, (in which view they speak of themselves and their office as *the gift of God to the church*; compare Eph. iv. 11, 12; and 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.) they should be *assisted to communicate it* in a proper manner; since otherwise the end of God in giving it to them would be frustrated. But the apostle does not content himself with barely suggesting this, but he asserts in the most express terms; (1 Cor. ii. 13.) *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth*, that is, not with a vain ostentation of human eloquence, *but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, or, as some would render

render and paraphrase it, *adapting spiritual* expressions *to spiritual things* *. And in the close of the chapter, when with a noble freedom, in a consciousness of the distinguished character he bore, he puts the question to the whole world besides; *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?* he adds, *But we have the mind of Christ.* Which last clause plainly determines the sense of which we are to take those words at the close of chap. vii. *And I think also that I have the Spirit of God* †: that is, "I certainly appear to have it;" or, "it is evident and apparent, that my pretences to it are not a vain boast." For, after having so expressly asserted it just above, none can imagine he meant here to insinuate, that he was *uncertain* whether he had it or not. He appeals therefore to those whose gifts were most eminent, to dispute it if they could: (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual,* that is, if he have ever so good evidence that he really is so, (for it cannot be thought he meant to appeal only to those who falsely pretended to these endowments) *let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*—In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. ii. 10.) he speaks of *forgiving* offenders *in the person of Christ;* and, amidst the humblest acknowledgments of *his own insufficiency,* boasts *a sufficiency of God, who had made him an able minister of the New Testament.* (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.) Of which he was so thoroughly sensible, that in the first epistle which he ever wrote (as far as scripture informs us) to any of the churches, I mean, his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he ventures to say, (chap. iv. 8,) *he that despiseth,* that is, (as the context plainly implies,) he that despiseth or rejecteth what I now write, *despiseth not man,* only or chiefly, *but God, who hath given us his Holy Spirit:* Which manifestly intimates, that what he wrote was under supernatural divine guidance and influence; as in the second verse of that chapter he had spoken of *commandments* which he had *given them by the Lord Jesus Christ,* just as he afterwards declared to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. xiii. 3.) how well he was able to give *proofs of Christ's speaking in him.*—In his Epistle to the Galatians, the apostle solemnly assures them, (Gal. i. 11, 12.) that *the gospel which he had preached* among them was *not after man,* that is, not of any human original; and he gives this substantial proof of it, *that he was himself taught it,* no otherwise than *by the* immediate *revelation of Jesus Christ.* Agreeably to which assertion, when he gives the Corinthians an account of the institution and design of *the Lord's supper,* he says in so many words, (1 Cor. xi. 13,) *that he had received of the Lord what he delivered unto them;* that is, that he had his notion of *that sacrament,* and of the actions and words of *Christ* on which it was founded, *by an immediate inspiration from him,* or in the language we have used above, *by suggestion.* And he speaks of

* Πνευματικοις πνευματικα συγκρινοντες.
† Δοκω δε κα γω Πνευμα Θεου εχειν.

of *his brethren*, as well as of *himself*, in these terms, (Eph. iii. 3, 5,) *that the mystery of Christ which was before unknown*, that is, the right of the Gentiles, on believing the gospel, to full communion with the Christian church, *was made known to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*, and not merely by the natural recollection of what they had heard Christ say, or by their own reasonings upon it.

Most agreeable to this is the strain of Peter, who in *one epistle* joins *the commandment of the apostles* with *the words of the holy prophets*; (2 Pet. iii. 2;) and mentions *the epistles of Paul* with *other scriptures*, (ver. 15 16,) no doubt in allusion to the sacred oracles of the *Old Testament*, which so generally went by that name. And in *his other epistle* he insists strenuously upon it, that *the gospel was preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*, in exact conformity to the *prophetic oracles* of former ages, *not understood by those who uttered them*; a circumstance, in this connection, highly worthy of our remark: And he seems strongly to intimate, that *the angels themselves* did by these *apostolical preachings* learn some things which, with all their superior faculties, they did not before so fully know; *Which things*, says he, *the angels desire to look into*. (1 Pet. i. 12.) As Paul had also said, that *to the principalities and powers in heavenly places was made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God*. Eph. iii. 10.

To conclude this argument, St. John, remarkable as he was for his singular modesty and ingenuousness of temper, does not only tell us, that Jesus Christ shewed him *the revelation*, (Rev. i. 1.) but speaks in his *epistle* of *an unction* poured out *from the Holy One*, by which they *knew all things*. (1 John ii. 20.) And in another passage he in effect asserts, that he had, in concurrence with *his brethren*, given such *abundant proof* of his being *under a divine influence* and *direction* in his teaching, whether by *word* or *letter*, that an agreement or disagreement with his doctrine was to be made *the standard* by which they might judge of truth or error, and obedience or disobedience to his injunctions *the test* of a good or a bad man; which is considerably more than merely asserting *the fullest inspiration*. (1 John iv. 6.) *We are of God: He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us: hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

I might here add, if it were necessary, the several passages of the New Testament in which *the gospel* preached by the apostles is called *the gospel of God*; (such as 2 Cor. xi. 7; 1 Tim. i. 11, and the like:) But I omit them, as *the stress* of the controversy does undoubtedly rest on *these* I have mentioned; and the *importance* of the question must be my defence, for so large an enumeration of *texts* which are so well known.

I shall only remind my reader, in a few words, of those many passages in which *the gospel*, as preached by the apostles, is so evidently *equalled* with, yea and *preferred* to, *the law* given by Moses, and the *messages* brought to the Jews by the succeeding *prophets*. These afford a further illustration of this argument, which

which will appear with very considerable weight, when we reflect on the *high opinion* they had of the Old Testament, and the honourable terms in which they speak of it, as *the word* and *oracles of God*, (Rom. iii. 2,) as *given by his inspiration*, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) and as that *which holy men spake, as they were moved*, or borne on [φερομενοι] *by the Holy Ghost*. (2 Pet. i. 21.) None can fail of observing, that they quote *its authority* on all occasions as *decisive*; yea, *our Lord* himself strongly intimates, not only the strict *truth* of the whole, but (which is much more) that it were intolerable to suppose it chargeable with any *impropriety of expression*; for this must be the sense of these remarkable words, (John x. 35,) that *the scripture cannot be broken*; and the whole force of *our Lord's argument* depends upon interpreting them thus. I might argue at large the *improbability*, and indeed the great *absurdity* of supposing, that *such assistances* were given to Moses and *the prophets*, as to make *their writings* an infallible rule of faith and practice, and that the *subjects* of God's *only begotten Son*, and the grand minister in his kingdom, should be *left destitute* of equal assistance in *their work* and *writings*. I think the argument would be unanswerable, if *considered apart*: But I now mention it in another view, as illustrating the persuasion the *apostles* had of *their own inspiration*, when they speak of *their teachings* and decisions as *equally authentic* with those of the illustrious *prophets*, for whom they had so great and so just a regard.

I am fully satisfied that this last argument, from *the manner* in which the *apostles speak of themselves* in their writings, will strike the reader in proportion to the degree in which he reflects upon the *true character* of those excellent men, and especially upon that *modesty* and *humility* in which they bore so bright and so lovely a resemblance of *their divine Master*. Let him ask himself, what he would think of any *minister of Christ* now, supposing him ever so eminent for learning, wisdom, and piety, that should assume to himself *such an authority?* Suppose such a man, under the influence of *no miraculous guidance*, to say, not with reference to what he might quote from others, but with regard to his own dictates, "*The things which I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord: He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God: We have the mind of Christ*; and *he that heareth not us*, that receiveth not our dictates in religion, *is not of God:* Suppose, I say, such language as this to be used publicly by any *Christian minister* now on earth, and you must necessarily suppose *his character* from that very hour *overthrown*. The whole world would immediately join in loudly demanding *miraculous proofs* to verify such assertions; or in condemning, with just indignation, such a claim *unsupported by them*, as an unpardonable *lording it over men's faith and conscience*, and thrusting themselves into their Master's throne. Let us not then charge *the holy apostles* with a conduct, of which we should not suspect any wise and good man now upon the face of the earth; and which if we saw

saw in any of our friends, our charity and respect for them would incline us to inquire after some marks of *lunacy* in them, as its best excuse.

I have now given an easy and popular view of the *principal arguments* for the *inspiration* of the New Testament*, on which my own faith in that important doctrine rests; and such an one as I hope by the divine blessing may be useful to others. I shall not enter into a particular consideration of the several *objections* against it, which chiefly arise from *texts of scripture*, in which some pretend to find, that the *apostles* were actually *mistaken*. I have considered most of these objections already, in my *notes* on the *texts* from whence they are taken: For almost all of them relate to passages in the *historical books*, and I do not know that I have omitted any of them; but have every where given (though as briefly as I could) *such solutions* as appeared to me in conscience *satisfactory*, though I have not stood formally to discuss them *as objections against the inspiration of those books*.

The reader will observe, that *very few instances* have occurred, in which I have judged it necessary to allow *an error* in our *present copies:* But as in those *few instances* the supposed *change* of a *word* or *two* makes the matter perfectly easy, I think it *most respectful* to the *sacred writings* to account for the seeming difficulty thus, and to impute it to the *transcribers:* (though it is certain some of these *mistakes*, supposing them such, did happen *very early;)* because, as *Mr. Seed* very properly expresses it in his excellent *sermon* on this subject†, (which, since I wrote the former part of this dissertation, fell into my hands), "a *partial inspiration* is to all intents and purposes *no inspiration at all:* "For," as he justly argues against the supposition of any *mixture of error* in these *sacred writings*, "mankind would be as much embarrassed to know what was *inspired*, and what was *not*, as they could be to *collect a religion* for themselves; the consequence of which would be, that we are left *just where we were*, and that God put himself to a great expence of *miracles* to effect nothing at all: A consequence highly derogatory and injurious to his honour."

The arguments brought from a few passages in the *epistles*, to prove that the *apostles* did not *think themselves inspired*, weak as they are, will be considered, if God permit, in their *proper places*. At present I shall content myself with referring the reader to Dr. Whitby, who I think has given a satisfactory solution to them all.

There are *other objections* of a quite different class, with which

I

* I was desired by a friend, for whose piety and good sense I have a very great regard, to add *a note* here on the *inspiration of the Old Testament;* but, as it would require a large one, and might perhaps interrupt the reader, I choose to throw it into a *Postscript* at the end of this Dissertation.

† See *Mr. Seed's Sermon*, Vol. II. p. 322.

I have no concern; because they affect only *such a degree of inspiration* as I think it *not prudent*, and am sure it is *not necessary*, to assert. I leave them therefore to be *answered by those*, if any such there be, who imagine that Paul would need *an immediate revelation* from heaven, and a miraculous dictate of the *Holy Ghost*, to remind *Timothy of the cloak and writings which he left at Troas*, or to advise him to *mingle a little wine with his water*.

Waving therefore the farther discussion of these topics, on which it would be more easy than profitable to enlarge, I shall *conclude this dissertation* with *a reflection or two* of a *practical* nature, into which I earnestly intreat the reader to enter with a becoming attention.

Let me engage him seriously to pause and consider, *what sort of an impression* it ought to make upon us, to think *that we have such a book;* a book written by a *full divine inspiration:* That amidst all the uncertain variety of human reasonings and conjectures, we have *a celestial guide* through the labyrinth: That God hath condescended to take care, that we should have *a most authentic* and unerring *account* of certain important, though very distant *facts*, many of which were wrought with his own hand; and, with *these facts*, should have a *system* of most weighty and interesting *doctrines*, to the truth of which he makes himself a witness. *Such a book* must, to every considerate person, appear *an inestimable treasure;* and it certainly calls for our most *affectionate acknowledgement*, that God should confer *such a favour* on any of his creatures, and much more *on those* who, by abusing in too many instances *their natural light*, had made themselves so utterly unworthy of *supernatural*.

From this view of the *inspiration of scripture* we may also infer, our obligation *to study it* with the greatest attention and care; *to read it* in our closets and our families; and *to search* in the most diligent and impartial manner into its genuine sense, design, and tendency; which is in the main *so evident*, that no upright heart can fail of *understanding it*, and every truly good heart must delight to *comply with it*. This is indeed a most *important inference*, and that without which all our convictions of *its divine authority* will only condemn us before God and our own consciences. Let us therefore always remember, that in consequence of all these important premises we are indispensably *obliged* to receive, with calm and reverend submission, *all the dictates* of *scripture;* to make it *our oracle;* and, in this respect, to set it *at a due distance* from *all other writings* whatsoever: as it is certain there is *no other book* in the world that can pretend to *equal authority*, and produce *equal* or comparable proofs to support such a pretension. Let us measure the truth of *our own sentiments*, or those of *others*, in the great things which *scripture* teaches, by their *conformity to it*. And O that the powerful charm of *this blessed book* might prevail to

to *draw all* that do sincerely regard it *into this center of unity!* That dropping those *unscriptural forms* which have so lamentably *divided the church*, we might more generally content ourselves with the *simplicity of divine truths* as they are here taught, and agree to put the mildest and kindest interpretation we can, upon the language and sentiments of each other. This is what I cannot forbear inculcating again and again, from a firm persuasion that it is agreeable to *the Spirit of the gospel*, and pleasing to *its great Author:* And I inculcate it in this place, and at this time, with peculiar affection, as the providence of God around us calls us loudly to do all, we can with a safe conscience to promote *a union among the Protestants.* And I heartily pray, that our mutual *jealousies* and *prejudices*, which some are so unseasonably labouring to exasperate, may not provoke God to *drive us together* by a storm of *persecution;* if peradventure *the bond of suffering together* may be strong enough to *bind those* whom the endearments of the same *Christian profession*, the same rule of faith, of manners, and of hope, have not yet been *able to unite.*

On the whole, let me most affectionately invite and entreat every reader, whatsoever his rank in life, or his proficiency in learning may be, seriously to consider *the practical design* of these *sacred oracles*, the sense and authority of which I have been endeavouring to explain and assert. It is indeed a *mystery* in divine Providence, that there should still remain *so much difficulty* in them, as that, *in many points of doctrine*, thoughtful, serious, and I trust, upright men should form *such different opinions* concerning the interpretation of so many passages, and the justice of consequences drawn from them on the one side, and on the other. But of this there can be no controversy, "That the *great design of the New Testament* (in delightful harmony with the *Old*,) is to call off our minds from the present world, to establish us in the belief of a future state, and to form us to a serious preparation for it by bringing us to a lively *faith in Christ*, and, as the genuine effect of that, to a filial *love to God*, and a fraternal *affection for each other;*" or in one word, (and a weightier and more comprehensive sentence was never written,) *to teach us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* (Tit. ii. 12,13.) To his almighty hand may our souls be committed by a *faith* productive of these glorious fruits, and under the sanctifying, quickening, and supporting influences of *his Spirit*, may we *wait for his mercy unto eternal life!* Then shall no terror of *suffering*, no allurement of *pleasure*, no sophistry of *error*, be able to seduce us; but, *guided* by that *light and truth* which shines forth in the *sacred pages*, we shall march on to that *holy hill*, where, having happily escaped all the dangers of that *dark path* which we now tread, we shall greet *the dawning* of an everlasting day, *the arising of a day-star* which shall *go down no more.* Amen!

POSTSCRIPT.

A Sketch of the arguments, by which the inspiration of the Old Testament may be proved in the easiest method, and by the most solid and convincing evidence.

IF the proof of the *inspiration* of the *Old Testament* be deduced in its full compass from its first principles, we must have recourse to *a method*, very nearly resembling *that* which is taken in the *three Sermons* referred to above, for proving the authority of *the New;* that is, we must first prove, That *the books* are *genuine*, and then, That *the history* which they contain is *credible;* from which premises *the inspiration* of the *Old Testament* may easily be inferred by *a train of arguments*, similar to that which we have pursued in the *Dissertation* above.

For proving *the genuineness* of the *books*, I should think it proper briefly to shew, (what I think hardly any will be so ignorant and confident as to deny,) that the *Jewish religion* is of considerable *antiquity*, and was founded by Moses about *fifteen hundred years* before Christ's time; and farther,——that the Jews, before and at the time of Christ, had *books* among them bearing *the titles* of those which make up what we Protestants, call *the canonical Books of the Old Testament;*——and that *these books*, then received in the *Jewish church*, were the *genuine works* of the persons to whom they were respectively ascribed:—— From hence it is easy farther to shew, that they *have not suffered*, and (considering what a guard the Jews and Christians were upon each other,) *could not suffer* any *material alteration* since; and consequently, that *the Old Testament*, as now extant in the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, is *genuine*, and in the main such as it originally was.

In order to prove its *credibility* from this established *medium*, we may prepare the way by shewing, that many *material facts*, which are there recorded, are also *mentioned* by very ancient *Heathen writers.*——And it is yet more important to shew, as we very easily may, that there is room to go over the same leading thoughts, with those insisted upon in the *second* of the *three Sermons* mentioned above, and to argue the *credibility of the story* from the certain opportunities, which the *writers* had of informing themselves as to the *certain truth* of the *grand facts* which they assert, as having themselves been *personally concerned* in them, and from those many marks of *integrity* and *piety* to be found in their writings, which may do as much as any thing of that kind can do, to obviate any suspicion of an *intention to deceive.*——We may here also advance farther, and demonstrate beyond all contradiction, that the *facts asserted* were of such a nature, as could not possibly have *gained credit*, had they been *false;* yet that they did gain *most assured credit*, of which the persons receiving these books gave the most substantial evidence that can be imagined, by receiving, on the authority of these facts, *a system of laws*, which though considered as to be *divinely supported* they were admirably wise, yet were of such a nature, that, without *such an extraordinary Providence* as nothing but an assurance of such

an

an original could have warranted them to expect, they must necessarily have proved *ruinous to the State* they were intended to regulate and establish *.

A farther and very noble evidence of the *truth* of the *grand facts* attested in the *Old Testament*, and of the *inspiration* of a considerable part of it, may be drawn from the consideration of those numerous and various *predictions* to be found in it, which refer to a multitude of events, several of them before utterly unexampled, which no human sagacity could possibly have foreseen, and which nevertheless happened exactly according to *those predictions* †.

Having advanced thus far, we may take up *a set of arguments* correspondent to those insisted on above, to prove from its *genuineness* and *credibility*, now supposed to be evinced, that the *Old Testament* was *written* by a *superintendent inspiration*: And this we may argue, not merely or chiefly from the *tradition* to this purpose, so generally and so early prevailing in the *Jewish church*, though that is considerable, nor even from those very signal and glorious *internal evidences* of various kinds, which every competent judge may easily see and feel, but from surveying the *character* and *circumstances* of the *persons* by whom the several books were written, in comparison with the genius of that dispensation under which they lived and wrote. This may, in all the branches of the argument, be proved in this way, with the greatest ease and strength, concerning Moses and *his writings*: And, when the authority of *the Pentateuch* is established, that of the most material *succeeding books* stand in so easy and natural a connection with it, that I think few have been found, at least since the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, who have in good earnest allowed Moses to have been *a messenger from heaven*, and denied the *inspiration* of the *prophets*, and of the books which we receive as written by them.

But it is obvious, that the illustration of *all these propositions* would be the work of a large volume, rather than of such a *postscript* to a *dissertation*, itself of so moderate a length. I have discussed them all with the most material *objections* which have been advanced against them, in that course of *theological lectures*, which I mentioned in the *Preface* to the *first volume*, and which it is my continual care to render worthy the acceptance of the public in due time, by such alterations and additions as frequent reviews, in conjunction with what occurs to me in reading, conversation, or meditation, may suggest.

I shall conclude these hints with the mention of one argument for the *inspiration* of the *Old Testament*, entirely independent on all the former, which a few words may set in a convincing light, and which must be satisfactory to all who see the reasonableness of acquiescing in what I have urged above; I mean,—That *the inspiration*, and consequently *the genuineness* and *credibility*, of the *Old Testament*, may be *certainly inferred* from *that of the New* ‡, because *our Lord* and his *apostles* were so far from charging

* The reader will easily imagine, I here refer especially to *the laws* relating to *letting all the land lie fallow together* once in *seven years*, and *two years together* at every *Jubilee*, the *desertion of their borders* at the *three great feasts*, when *all the males* went up to the *tabernacle* or *temple*, and the *disuse of cavalry*; to omit some others.

† See *Dr. Sykes's Connection.*

‡ It may be *objected* to this, that the *authority* of the *New Testament*, as stated in the *sermons* referred to, and in most other *defences of Christianity*, is in part *proved* from the *prophecies* of *the Old*; so that *the argument* here urged would be *circular*. To which I would answer, (1.) That, if we were to take *this medium alone*, we must indeed subtract from

charging the *scribes* and *pharisees*, (who on all proper occasions are censured so freely,) with having introduced into the *sacred volume* any merely human compositions, that, on the contrary, they not only *recommend* a diligent and constant perusal of *these scriptures*, as of the greatest importance to men's eternal happiness, but speak of them as *divine oracles* and as written by the extraordinary influence of the *Holy Spirit* upon the minds of the authors.

I desire that the following *list* of *scriptures* may be attentively consulted and reflected on in this view. I might have added a great many more, indeed *several hundreds*, in which *the sacred writers* of the *New Testament* argue from *those of the Old* in such a manner, as nothing could have justified but *a firm persuasion* that they were *divinely inspired*. Now as the Jews always allowed, "that the *testimony* of an *approved prophet* was sufficient to *confirm the mission* of one who was supported by it," so I think every reasonable man will readily conclude, that *no inspired person* can *erroneously* attest *another* to be *inspired;* and indeed the very definition of *plenary inspiration*, as stated above, absolutely excludes any room for cavilling on so plain a head. I throw the *particular passages*, which I choose to mention, into the *margin* below *; and he must be *a very indolent inquirer* into a question of so much importance, who does not think it worth his while to *turn carefully to them*, unless he has already such a conviction of the argument, that it should need no farther to be illustrated or confirmed.

from the *proof of Christianity* all that branch of its evidence which grows from *prophecies* in the *Old Testament;* and then, all that arises from *miracles*, *internal arguments*, and the *wonderful events*, which have followed its first promulgation, would stand in their full force, first to *demonstrate* (I think, to high satisfaction) *the divine original* of the *New Testament*, and then to prove *the authority* of the *Old:* (2.) That most of the *enemies* of the *Mosaic* and *Christian Revelation*, do nevertheless *own* those which we call *the Prophetical Books* of the *Old Testament* to be *more ancient* than *the New*; and on this foundation alone, without first taking for granted, that they are either *inspired* or *genuine*, we derive an argument for *Christianity* from their *mere existence*, and then may argue *backward*, that they were *divinely inspired* and therefore *genuine;* and so, by a farther consequence, may infer from them *the divine authority* of the *Mosaic religion*, which they so evidently attest; which is an argument distinct from the *testimony* of the *authors of the New Testament*, but important enough to deserve a mention.

* John v. 39; Mat. iv. 4, 7, 10; Mark xii. 24; Luke x. 26, 27; Mat. v. 17, 18, xxi. 42; xxii. 29, 31, 43; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 54, 56; Luke i. 67, 69, 70; xvi. 31; xxiv. 25, 27; John x. 35; Acts ii. 16, 25; iii. 22, 24; iv. 25; xvii. 11; xviii. 24, 28 xxviii. 25; Rom. iii. 2, 10; ix. 25, 27, 29; x. 5, 11, 16; xv. 4; xvi. 26; 1 Cor. x. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 13; vi. 16, 17; Gal. iii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 18; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16; Heb. i. 1, 5—13; iii. 7; Jam. ii. 8; iv. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 10—12; 2 Pet. i. 19—21.

NUMBER

NUMBER III.

ADVERTISEMENT

RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING TABLE.

AS I thought it would be acceptable to my readers, to have the *contents* of the several *sections* of this work (which must contain an *abridgment* of the *evangelical history*,) exhibited in one connected view as concisely as possible, I chose, for many obvious reasons, to dispose it into a *chronological table*.

So far as the *harmony* of the *four evangelists*, and the *order* of the *facts* mentioned in them, is in question, I have given my reason for the present disposition of my *notes* on the several *sections*, whose connection is liable to the greatest disputes. But it would be a work of great additional labour, to enter into a discussion of the correspondence between the *sacred chronology* in this part of it, and the *prophane*. Had I leisure and ability to canvass all that learned men have said in support of the *different schemes* they have advanced on this head, I should think *this Appendix* to *a Family Expositor* a very improper place to attempt it, as such an inquiry must take up a great deal of room, and as it is an affair in which it is impossible that *common readers* should judge, and in which after all, I think, they have very little concern. And indeed, to say the truth, I much question whether on the most accurate inquiry it is possible absolutely to fix it, since if the very day of *Herod's death* could be determined, (which after all, I think, it cannot be,) there would still be room to debate, how long before that time Jesus was born, as also what distance of time there was between the first appearance of *John the Baptist*, and Christ's entering on his public ministry. One conjecture may seem more probable than another: but beyond *conjecture*, I think, none has attained; and the *chronology* must vary with the diversity of *that conjecture* on these particulars.

The learned reader will immediately perceive, that, amidst the various *hypotheses* which would offer themselves here, I have taken *the middle way*, not only as in obscure cases I think *that* generally *the safest*, nor merely that *this table* might in the main *agree* with those of our illustrious Chronologers, Bp. Pearson and Dr. Prideaux, to whose judgment on such questions I pay a very great deference; but chiefly as on the most exact and impartial examination I could form of the reasons and foundations, on which *other*

critics

critics proceed, in placing the chief events *a few years* higher or lower, (and it is well known, that but *very few years* can be in question,) I found them by no means satisfactory, and the *former class* much less so, than I imagined when I began the *first volume* of this work, and before I had so carefully searched into some of the authorities.

I once thought of adding a few *notes* to this *Table*; but I found, that, if I attempted any thing important, they must be so large as greatly to swell the bulk, and therefore I have waved it; and content myself with saying, That though I am not without my doubts as to several articles, I know not any scheme, which has on the whole stronger supports, and is liable to fewer objections.

There might have been several columns added to the *Table*, expressing the *years* of other celebrated *æras* corresponding with those here mentioned; but any one may easily supply these to himself when he recollects, that the *first year* of the *common æra* of *Christ's birth*, from which we reckon this the 1760*th*, was (according to the computation here received) the 4004*th* from the *creation of the world*, the 753*d* from the *building of Rome*, and the 4714*th* of the *Julian period*.

It may not be improper to repeat what I have observed elsewhere, that, according to Sir Isaac Newton's computation, the *Jewish Passover* happened *A. D.* 30, on Saturday, March 25.——*A. D.* 31, on Wednesday, March 28.——*A. D.* 32, on Monday, April 14.——*A. D.* 33, on Friday, April 3.——and *A. D.* 34, on Friday, April 23.

To this I shall only add, that Augustus, in whose days Christ was born, reigned after the defeat of Mark Antony at Actium 44 years.——Tiberius, after he had been *colleague with Augustus* in the empire about *three years*, became *sole emperor* on the death of Augustus, August 19, *A. D.* 14.——Caligula succeeded on the death of Tiberius, March 16, *A. D.* 37.——Claudius succeeded on the death of Caligula, Jan. 24, *A. D.* 41.——And Nero on the death of Claudius, October 13, *A. D.* 54, whose reign continued to June 9, *A. D.* 68, beyond the limits of this history.

A CHRO-

A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

OF THE

Several Events recorded in the History of the Evangelists, and Acts of the Apostles; containing also the Contents of the several Sections of this Work.

Emperors of *Rome.*	Before the common Æra of *Christ's birth.*	CONTENTS OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.	
		After Luke's preface, § 1, and John's account of the divinity of our blessed Redeemer, § 2, the historical facts follow in the order here represented.	
Augustus. 25	6	The angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias, to give him notice of the approaching conception and birth of his son John the Baptist, § 3.	J. P. 4708. 4709.
26	5	Six months after, he informs the Virgin Mary of the conception of Christ to be born of her, § 4. Mary visits Elizabeth, and breaks out into a song of praise, § 5. John the Baptist is born and circumcised, § 6. and Zacharias utters an inspired song of praise, § 7. The suspicion of Joseph, occasioned by Mary's pregnancy, removed by the appearance of an angel, § 8. The genealogy of Jesus Christ, § 9.	
27	4	Jesus is born at Bethlehem, and his birth revealed to the shepherds: He is circumcised the eighth day, § 10. The purification of Mary, the song of Simeon, and testimony of Anna, § 11. The inquiry, worship, and return of the Magi, § 12, after which Jesus is carried into Egypt, and the infants at Bethlehem are massacred, § 13—	J. P. 4710.
28	3	Herod dying, the holy family returns, and settle at Nazareth, §—13. Jesus at twelve years old goes up with his parents to	J. P. 4711. 4721.

			8	to the passover at Jerusalem, discourses with the doctors in the temple, and returns to Nazareth, § 14.
J. P. 4739.	*Augustus.*	After the common Æra of *Christ's* Birth.	26	John the Baptist opens his ministry, and multitudes come to receive his baptism, § 15; to whom he addresses suitable admonitions, proclaims the approach of the Messiah, § 16, and gives a public testimony to the dignity of his person, § 17.
J. P. 4742.	15 *Tiberius* with *Aug.*	12 *Tiberius* alone.	29	Jesus comes from Nazareth, and is baptized by John; the Spirit descends upon him, and a voice from heaven declares him to be *the Son of God*, § 18.
				Jesus is led into the wilderness, where he fasts forty days, and is tempted by the devil, § 19.
				John is examined by the Jews, and declares he is not the Messiah, referring them to one incomparably superior to himself, § 20. Sees Jesus coming towards him, and bears a repeated testimony to him as *the Lamb of God;* upon which two of his disciples follow Jesus, and Andrew brings Peter to him, § 21.
			15	Jesus goes into Galilee, where he calls Philip and Nathaniel, § 22.
				Attends a marriage there at Cana, where he performs the miracle of turning *water into wine*, § 23.
J. P. 4743.			16 30	Makes a short visit to Capernaum, and from thence goes up to Jerusalem to the *first Passover*, after his entrance on his ministry, and drives the *traders* there out of the temple, § 24.
				His conference with Nicodemus, § 25, 26.
				Goes from Jesusalem into the land of Judea, and there baptizes, by his disciples; John hears of it, and rejoicing in it, gives his last public testimony to Jesus, § 27.
				John is cast into prison for his faithfulness in reproving Herod, § 28.
				Jesus near the winter solstice, returns into Galilee through Samaria, confers with a woman of Sichar, and spends two days there, § 29, 30.
				Comes into Galilee, and preaches there; and while at Cana, cures *a nobleman's son* who was dying at Capernaum, § 31.
				Preaches at Nazereth; but being rejected there, goes to settle for a while at Capernaum, § 32.
				Preaches with great acceptance at Capernaum, and calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John, to a more stated attendance upon him, § 33,34.

Casts

A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

OF THE

Several Events recorded in the History of the Evangelists, and Acts of the Apostles; containing also the Contents of the several Sections of this Work.

Emperors of *Rome.*	Æra of *Christ's birth.*	CONTENTS OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.	
		After Luke's preface, § 1, and John's account of the divinity of our blessed Redeemer, § 2, the historical facts follow in the order here represented.	
Augustus. 25	6	The angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias, to give him notice of the approaching conception and birth of his son John the Baptist, § 3.	J. P. 4708. 4709.
26	5	Six months after, he informs the Virgin Mary of the conception of Christ to be born of her, § 4. Mary visits Elizabeth, and breaks out into a song of praise, § 5. John the Baptist is born and circumcised, § 6. and Zacharias utters an inspired song of praise, § 7. The suspicion of Joseph, occasioned by Mary's pregnancy, removed by the appearance of an angel, § 8. The genealogy of Jesus Christ, § 9.	
27	4	Jesus is born at Bethlehem, and his birth revealed to the shepherds: He is circumcised the eighth day, § 10. The purification of Mary, the song of Simeon, and testimony of Anna, § 11. The inquiry, worship, and return of the Magi, § 12, after which Jesus is carried into Egypt, and the infants at Bethlehem are massacred, § 13—	J. P. 4710.
28	3	Herod dying, the holy family returns, and settle at Nazareth, §—13. Jesus at twelve years old goes up with his parents to	J. P. 4711. 4721.

	Tiberius 17.	*Anno Dom.* 31.	manding a sign from heaven; and declares the parable of the *relapsing dæmoniac*, § 63. Declares his resolution of persisting in his work, and his endeared affection to his obedient disciples, § 64. Goes to the sea-side, and there delivers to the multitude the parable of the *sower*, § 65, which he explains to his disciples, § 66; delivers and explains the parable of the *tares*, § 67; and then adds those of the *springing seed*, the *mustard seed*, the *leaven*, the *hid treasure*, the *pearl*, and the *net*, § 68. Having answered some that seemed disposed to follow him, he crosses the sea and *stills a tempest*, § 69. Arriving at the country of the Gadarenes, he dispossesses *two dæmoniacs;* and permitting the dæmons to enter into a *herd of swine*, he is desired by the Gadarenes to depart, and crosses over to Capernaum, § 70. Being entertained at Matthew's house, he justifies his conversing with publicans and sinners, and vindicates his disciples in omitting some austerities that were practised by others, § 71. Having cured a *woman* of a *flux of blood*, he raises from the dead the *daughter of Jairus*, and performs some other miracles, § 72. Goes from Capernaum to Nazareth, and being again rejected there, begins another circuit, § 73. Sends out his *twelve apostles* with proper *instructions* to prepare his way; and, after this, they go and preach in different parts, § 74—76. Herod hears of his fame, and suspects him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom he had lately *beheaded* in prison, § 77.
J. P. 4745.	18	32	The apostles meet him again, a little before another passover, and he retires with them to the Desert of Bethsaida by sea: Multitudes flock to hear him, and he miraculously feeds *five thousand:* They would have *made him king*, but he obliges his disciples to take ship, and having dismissed the multitude retires to pray, § 78. The disciples crossing the sea, are overtaken by a *storm:* Jesus comes to them *walking on the sea*, and *stills the tempest;* and landing near Capernaum, many are brought that were diseased, and he cures all that touch him, § 79. Being followed by the multitude to Capernaum, he tells them of their worldly views in seeking him, declares himself to be *the bread of life*, and urges the necessity and benefit of feeding on him, § 80, 81.

Tiberius 18. Anno Dom. 32.

The people murmur at his doctrine, and many of his hearers leave him: The *apostles* assure him of their continued fidelity, but he foretells the treachery of Judas, § 82.

The Pharisees blaming his disciples for *eating with unwashen hands*, he vindicates their neglect of *human traditions*, condemns the Pharisees for preferring them to the law of God, and inculcates the necessity of inward purity, § 83, 84.

About the time of this *Third Passover*, Jesus withdraws to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he casts out a *dæmon* from the daughter of a *Syrophœnician woman;* and returning through the coasts of Decapolis to the sea of Galilee, cures a man *deaf and dumb*, § 85.

After many other amazing miracles, he feeds *four thousand;* and then takes ship with his disciples, and goes to Dalmanutha, in the coasts of Magdala, § 86.

Upbraids the Pharisees again for asking a sign from heaven, and cautions his disciples against *their leaven* and that of the Sadducees, § 87.

Heals a *blind man* at Bethsaida; and going from thence to Cæsarea Philippi, acknowledges to his disciples that he is the Messiah, and commends Peter's confession of him under that character, § 88.

Foretels his approaching sufferings, rebukes Peter for being offended at the mention of them, and exhorts his followers to self-denial and a readiness for martyrdom, § 89.

Christ is *transfigured*, and discourses with his disciples concerning the expectation the Jews had of Elijah, § 90.

Descending from the mountain where he was transfigured, he casts out an obstinate dæmon, that had withstood the attempt of his disciples, § 91.

Continuing his progress through Galilee, he again warns his disciples of his approaching sufferings, at which they are offended, § 92—

Comes to Capernaum, and makes provision by a miracle to *pay the tribute*, § —92.

Perceiving his disciples were contending who should be greatest, he recommends humility and mortification to them, § 93; advises how to deal with an offending brother, § 94, and urges forgiveness by the parable of the *unmerciful servant*, § 95.

Reproves John for rebuking one who cast out dæmons in his name, because not of their company, § 96.

Chooses *the seventy*, and sends them out to preach with

Tiberius 18. *Anno Dom.* 32.

with large instructions, like those he had given to the *twelve apostles* § 97.

Discourses with his brethren about his going up to the *feast of tabernacles*, and tarries some days after them in Galilee, § 98: Then goes up to Jerusalem about the middle of the feast, (which was in September,) and preaches in the temple, vindicating his own conduct, and asserting his divine mission, § 99.

The Sanhedrim, alarmed at the regard the people shewed him, send officers to seize him; but he declares, they should not execute their purpose as yet, § 100: The officers admire his preaching, and return without him; which occasions a debate in the Sanhedrim between Nicodemus and his brethren § 101.

Having spent the night in retirement, he returns in the morning to the temple, where he declines giving judgment in the case of the *adulteress*, § 102: Speaking of himself as *the light of the world*, he warns his hearers of the danger of infidelity, § 103; shews the vanity of depending on a descent from Abraham, § 104, and declares his own existence to be prior to that of Abraham; at which the Jews are so offended as to go about to stone him, but he miraculously escapes out of their hands, § 105.

Before he sets out on his last circuit through Galilee, the *seventy* return with joy, and report the success of their embassy, § 106.

Jesus answers the *scribes*, who inquired the way to life, and delivers the parable of the *good Samaritan*. § 107.

Leaving Jerusalem he comes to Bethany, where he commends Mary's attention to his word, as better than Martha's care to entertain him, § 108.

Being returned to Galilee, he gives his disciples several instructions relating to *prayer*, § 109.

Dining with a Pharisee, he admonishes him and his brethren of their guilt and danger, § 110; and afterwards cautions his disciples against hypocrisy, and the fear of man, § 111; declines to decide a case of property, and delivers the parable of the *rich fool*, § 112, repeating his cautions against covetousness which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount, § 113, and urging them to watchfulness, in expectation of his second coming and of their last account, § 114.

Declares his desire of accomplishing his work, and warns his hearers of the danger of neglecting his message, § 115.

CON-

Tiberius 18. *Anno Dom.* 32.

Urges the necessity of *repentance*, and delivers the parable of the *barren fig-tree*, § 116; then cures a *crooked woman* on the sabbath-day, § 117; and continues his journey toward Jerusalem, not intimidated by the fear of Herod from pursuing his plan, § 118.

Being invited to dine with a Pharisee, he cures a man who had a *dropsy*, and vindicates his healing on the sabbath-day, § 119; foretels in the parable of the *great supper* the rejection of the Jews and calling of the Gentiles, § 120; and urges the necessity of deliberate resolution in religion, § 121.

The *publicans* and *sinners* flocking to hear him, he delivers the parables of the *lost sheep*, and *piece of money*, § 122, that of the *prodigal son*, § 123, the *unjust steward*, § 124, the *rich glutton* and *Lazarus*, § 125; and concludes with exhorting his disciples to simplicity, forgiveness, and humility, § 126.

Passing through Samaria, as he was going up to the *feast of dedication*, he rebukes the intemperate zeal of James and John, and heals *ten lepers*, § 127.

As he was near Jerusalem, he warns the Jews against expecting a pompous appearance of the Messiah's kingdom, and foretels their approaching destruction, § 128; presses his disciples to perseverance in prayer by the parable of the *importunate widow*, and recommends humility by that of the *Pharisee* and *Publican*, § 129.

Being come to Jerusalem at the *feast of dedication* in December, he opens the eyes of a man *born blind*, § 130; the man is examined by the *Sanhedrim*, and excommunicated; Jesus meets him, and declares himself to be *the Son of God*, § 131.

Having admonished the Pharisees of their danger, he represents himself, first as the *door* of the *sheepfold*, § 132, then as the *good shepherd* of the flock, § 133; and discourses of his union with the *Father*, upon which the Jews attempt to seize him, and he retires *beyond* Jordan, § 134.

19 33 Jesus declares against *divorces*, § 135; blesses the *little children*, § 136; answers the *young ruler*, who applied so respectfully to him; discourses of the *danger of riches*, § 137; and warns the Jews not to envy the Gentiles being called to equal privileges with themselves, by the parable of the *labourers in the vineyard*, § 138. J. P. 4746.

Hearing of the sickness of Lazarus, he determines to

Tiberius 19.	*Anno Dom.* 33.	to return into Judea, § 139, where he raises Lazarus from the dead, § 140. The *Sanhedrim* agreeing Jesus should be put to death, and publishing a proclamation against him, he retires to Ephraim, § 141. Setting out on his last journey to Jerusalem, he tells his disciples what he should suffer there, rebukes the ambition of Zebedee's *sons*, and exhorts to humility, § 142. Passing through Jericho, he cures the *two blind men*, and converts Zaccheus the publican, § 143: After which he delivers the parable of the *ten pounds*, and represents the vengeance he would take on his enemies, § 144. He is entertained at Bethany, and his feet anointed by Mary: Many flock thither to see Lazarus, whom also the *chief priests* conspire to kill, § 145. Christ rides in triumph to Jerusalem on the *first day of the week*, § 146. When he came near the city, he *weeps over it*, and at his entrance goes into the temple, which he vindicates a second time from the prophanation of the *traders*, and performs several miracles there, § 147. Discourses with some Greeks who came up to the *Passover*, and retires in the evening to Bethany, § 148. Christ returns to Jerusalem the next morning, (that is, on Monday in the Passion week,) and by the way curses the *barren fig-tree*, § 149; visits the temple, and again reforms the abuses of the *traders*: the *priests* are exasperated, and he retires in the evening, § 150. Returning to Jerusalem on Tuesday morning, the *fig-tree* is found *withered away*: Coming again into the temple, he confounds the members of the *Sanhedrim* who questioned his authority; utters the parable of the *complaisant but disobedient son*, § 151, and then that of the *vineyard let out to husbandmen*, § 152, and of the *wedding feast* and *garment*, § 153. Confounds the attempt to ensnare him in the question about paying *tribute*, § 154; proves the *resurrection* against the Sadducees, § 155; answers the question as to the *first commandment* of the law, § 156; and repeats his charges and denunciations against the Pharisees, § 157, 158. Going out of the temple, he applauds the liberality of a *poor widow*, § 159; foretells the destruction of Jeru-

Tiberius 19. Anno Dom. 33.

Jerusalem, acquainting his disciples with the *signs* of its approach, and of his *second coming*, § 160—162; and urges the suddenness of his appearance, as an engagement to *watchfulness*, § 163, which he enforces by the parable of the *ten virgins*, § 164, and of the *talents*, § 165, concluding his discourse with a most affecting description of the *last judgment*, § 166.

The *rulers* contrive how they may seize Jesus: Judas makes an infamous contract to betray him: He retires at night to the *mount of Olives*, § 167.

Christ returns again on Wednesday to teach in the temple as before; but the particulars are not recorded, *ibid*[a].

On Thursday morning, he directs two of his disciples to go and prepare the *Passover*, which was his *fourth* and last *Passover*: He comes in the evening, and sits down with his *apostles* to that feast, § 168.

At the antepast, he rebukes their ambition, and *washes their feet*, § 169. At supper, he intimates who should betray him, and Judas upon this retires, § 170 He exhorts them to mutual love, foretells Peter's fall, § 171, and then institutes the *eucharist*, § 172.

After this he addresses his disciples with a large *consolatory discourse*, § 173—178, which he closes with a solemn *prayer*, § 179, 180. Then retires from the guest-chamber to the *garden of Gethsemane*, renewing his caution to Peter and his brethren, § 181.

Christ falls into an *agony*: His disciples sleep, § 182. Judas betrays him: He yields himself up, and they forsake him, § 183. He is conducted to the palace of Caiaphas, where Peter denies him, § 184.

He is examined and condemned on Friday morning by the *Sanhedrim*, § 185: Then is brought before Pilate, and examined by him, § 186; is sent to Herod, who returns him to Pilate, § 187, who having in vain attempted his release, declaring to the Jews he found no fault in him, at length yields to their importunity, and gives judgment against him, § 188.

Being delivered up by Pilate, after various abuses, he is led forth to Calvary, and nailed to the *cross*, § 189. His garments are divided; and while he is himself outrageously insulted, he shews mercy to the *penitent robber*, § 190; and having commended *his mother* to the care of John, expires: Amazing prodigies attend his death, and alarm the spectators, § 191.

Christ's

Tiberius 19. *Anno Dom.* 33.

Christ's body is pierced on the *cross*; then begged, and buried, by *Joseph of Arimathea*, § 192.

Judas confesses his guilt on Christ's being condemned, and *hangs himself* in despair, § 193—

On the morrow after the crucifixion, (which was the *Jewish Sabbath*, or *Saturday*,) the Jews desire to have the snpulchre secured, and procure *a guard* to watch it, § —193.

Christ rises from the dead early on *Lord's day* morning: Mary Magdalene, finding the sepulchre open, calls Peter and John, who enter into it and return, while Christ makes *his first appearance* to her, § 194.

The other women, coming to the sepulchre, are informed of his resurrection by *angels*, who bid them go and tell his disciples: He appears to them as they return, and they report it to his incredulous disciples, § 195.

The *guards* who had fled away make their report of what had passed to the *chief priests*, and are hired to disguise the truth. Christ appears to Peter, § 196, and then to the *two disciples* on their way to Emmaus, § 197, who return and report it; and while they are together, Christ appears to all the company the same evening, § 198.

On that *day seven-night* he appears again to the *eleven*, Thomas being with them, and offers to be examined by his touch, § 199.

He discovers himself to Peter and other disciples at the *Sea of Tiberias*, while they were fishing, § 200; and, after a remarkable discourse with *that apostle*, foretells his martyrdom, § 201.

Christ appears to the whole body of his disciples in Galilee, and afterwards meets the *apostles* several times at Jerusalem, discoursing with them of the affairs of his kingdom, § 202.

He leads them out of the city, and, having blessed them, *ascends to heaven* in their sight: They return joyful to Jerusalem, § 203; with which the *history* of the *evangelists* concludes.

Christ (as was said before,) ascends to heaven from the *mount of Olives* in the view of his *apostles* forty days after his resurrection, § 1.

The *apostles* return to Jerusalem, and being assembled

Tiberius 19.	*Anno Dom.* 33.	bled with the rest of the disciples, Matthias is chosen in the room of Judas, § 2. The *Holy Spirit* descends upon the *apostles* on the day of *Pentecost*, and people of all nations hear them speak in their own language: Peter declares, that this was what the prophet Joel had foretold, § 3, and shews, that Jesus whom they crucified was risen from the dead, and was the true Messiah, § 4. Great numbers are converted, and baptized; and converts are daily added to the church, § 5. Peter and John cure a man who had been *lame from his birth* at the gate of the temple, § 6. Peter makes an affectionate discourse to the people assembled on that occasion, § 7. The *two apostles* are seized by order of the *Sanhedrim*, and, being examined by that court, courageously declare their resolution of persisting to preach in the name of Jesus: They are severely threatened, and dismissed, § 8. Returning to their company, they all unite in an inspired prayer, which is attended with a new effusion of the *Spirit*. The number and zeal of the converts increase. Many estates are sold, and the price distributed, § 9. Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead for their fraudulent dealing: The church increases, and extraordinary miracles are wrought, § 10. The twelve are apprehended and imprisoned, and, after a miraculous deliverance, are brought before the *Sanhedrim*, and scourged, but, by Gamaliel's prudent advise, are discharged without farther severities, § 11.
20	34	The *seven deacons* are chosen: The number of disciples multiplies, and many of the *priests* believe, § 12— Stephen, disputing strenuously with the Jews, is seized, and brought before the *Sanhedrim*, § —12. Being accused of blasphemy, he makes a long defence, but is interrupted in it, and tumultuously stoned to death, Saul heartily concurring in the execution, § 13—15.

CONTENTS OF THE EIGHT VOLUME, WHICH CONCLUDES THE HISTORY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A great *persecution* is raised at Jerusalem, where Saul makes havock of the church, who, being all dis-

Tiberius 20.	*Anno Dom. 34.*	persed but the *apostles*, go into other parts and preach the word, § 16— *Philip the deacon* preaches Christ at Samaria, and many believe; which also Simon Magus professes to do, and is baptized, §—16. Peter and John, being sent by the *apostles*, communicate the *Spirit* by the imposition of their hands; and Simon offering money for the like power, Peter detects and censures his hypocrisy. The *two apostles* return to Jerusalem, preaching the word in many villages of the Samaritans, § 17. Philip is ordered by an *angel* into the *desert* in the way to Gaza, where he instructs an *Ethiopian eunuch* in the faith of Christ; and, having baptized him, the *Spirit* takes him to Azotus, from whence, when he had preached in all the cities of the neighbouring coast, he comes to Cæsarea, § 18.
21	35	Saul, setting out for Damascus with an intent to persecute the church there, is miraculously *converted* by Christ's appearing to him on the way, who bids him go to Damascus, where he should hear what he must do. The light that shone around him strikes him blind, and, being led to Damascus, he continues three days fasting, § 19. Ananias, by divine direction, comes and restores his sight, declaring that the Lord had chosen him to be his witness unto all of what he had seen and heard; and, having baptized him, he receives the *Holy Spirit*, § 20. Immediately he preaches Christ at Damascus, and confounds the Jews, proving that Jesus is the true Messiah, *ibid.* Then goes into Arabia, and preaches there: from whence he returns to Damascus, where the Jews seek to kill him, but he makes his escape in the night, *ibid.*
2 *Caligula.*	38	Three years after his conversion, Saul returns to Jerusalem, and is introduced by Barnabas to Peter and James; but, preaching boldly there, he is again in danger from the Jews; on which the brethren conduct him to Cæsarea, and send him away to Tarsus, *ibid.* The *persecution* ceases, and the churches are multiplied, *ibid.*
3	39	Peter, making a progress through the neighbouring parts

Caligula 3.	*Anno Dom.* 39.	parts, cures Æneas of a palsy at Lydda, and raises Dorcas from the dead at Joppa, § 21.
		Cornelius, a devout centurion, is divinely admonished to send to Joppa for Peter, who, in obedience to the divine command, comes with his messengers to Cæsarea, preaches the gospel to him and his friends though Gentiles, and receives them into the church by baptism, § 22, 23.
		Peter, returning to Jerusalem, is questioned by the brethren of the circumcision for his conversing with such as were *uncircumcised;* but, on his giving an account of the matter, they acquiesce, and bless God for his grace to the Gentiles, § 24.
4	40	The gospel is preached at Antioch, and a great number of the Greeks believe. Barnabas is sent from the church at Jerusalem to confirm the disciples at Antioch, who are first called *christians* there, § 25.
Claudius. 2	42	Barnabas goes to Tarsus for Saul, and bringing him to Antioch, they spend a year together there, *ibid.*
	43	Agabus comes thither from Jerusalem, and foretells an approaching *famine:* A collection is resolved upon for the poor *brethren* in Judea, which is sent to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, *ibid.*
4	44	Herod Agrippa puts James to death at Jerusalem, and imprisons Peter, who is delivered by an *angel,* § 26.
		Herod extravagantly applauded at Cæsarea dies miserably by the stroke of an *angel,* § 27.
		Barnabas and Saul having executed their commission, and carried to Jerusalem what was collected for the poor brethren, return to Antioch, and bring with them John sirnamed Mark, § 28.
5	45	The *Holy Spirit* orders Barnabas and Saul to be set apart to preach to the Gentiles: They go to Seleucia attended by John, and from thence sail to Cyprus: Having preached at Salamis, they go through the island to Paphos, where Elymas opposing them is struck blind by Saul, (hereafter called Paul,) and Sergius Paulus the proconsul is converted, *ibid.*
		From hence they sail to Perga in Pamphylia, where John departing from them, returns to Jerusalem, § 29.
6	46	Paul and Barnabas go on to Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul makes a long discourse in the synagogue, and the Gentiles desire to hear him again, *ibid.* The Jews rejecting the word, they turn to the Gentiles; and

		and as many as are determined for eternal life believe, § 30.
Claudius 6.	*Anno Dom.* 46.	A persecution being raised against them by the Jews, they are driven away, and go to Iconium, *ibid.* Many converts are made there both of the Jews and Greeks. The unbelieving Jews stir up the multitude against them, and they depart to Lystra, where they cure a *lame man;* on which the people take them to be *gods,* and are hardly restrained from sacrificing to them, § 31. But, being followed thither by the Jews, the people are persuaded to *stone Paul,* who being left for dead recovers, and goes with Barnabas to Derbe, from whence they return through Pisidia and Pamphylia, constituting *presbyters* in every church, and sailing from Attalia, come back to Antioch in Syria, where having called the church together, they report the wonderful success of their ministry among the Gentiles, § 32—
8	48	Paul and Barnabas continue a long time with the disciples at Antioch, §—32.
		The Jewish converts urge the necessity of *circumcision:* Debates arise at Antioch; and Paul and Barnabas are sent, with some others, to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, § 33—
9	49	Having passed through Phœnicia and Samaria in their way, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles to the great joy of all the brethren, they come to Jerusalem, where the matter is debated in a full *assembly:* in which, after Peter and James had spoken for their liberty, the celebrated decree is made in favour of the Gentile converts, §—33, 34.
		They send back messengers with Paul and Barnabas, who arrive at Antioch with the decree; and having made some stay there, Judas returns to the apostles, but Silas chooses to continue longer there, § 35.
10	50	Peter comes down to Antioch, and is publicly reproved by Paul for dissimulation in his conduct, *ibid.*[a]
		Paul with Silas, and Barnabas with John sirnamed Mark, set out different ways, to visit the churches they had lately planted, §—35.
		Paul and Silas travel through Syria and Cilicia, and several provinces of the Lesser Asia, and come to Derbe and Lystra, where having associated Timothy with them, they go on to Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia,

Claudius 11.	*Anno Dom.* 51.	
		Mysia, and from thence come to Troas, where they are called to Macedonia, § 36— Being joined by Luke at Troas, they sail from thence and cross the sea to Europe, passing by Samothracia to Neapolis, where they land, and go to Philippi, §—36. Having preached at Philippi, Lydia is converted, and receives them into her house: But a tumult arising on Paul's dispossessing the Pythoness, he and Silas are scourged, and thrown into prison: The jailor is miraculously awakened and converted, § 37. On pleading they were Romans, the magistrates come and dismiss them; and having visited the brethren, they depart from Philippi, § 38. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they come to Thessalonica, where Paul having preached in the synagogue, and planted a christian church, the unbelieving Jews stir up the mob against them, and oblige them to depart, § 39.
12	52	Being come to Berœa, they are received more candidly by the Jews there, many of whom, and of the Greeks, believe; but being followed thither by the Jews of Thessalonica, Paul goes away to Athens, appointing Silas and Timothy to follow him, § 39. Paul greatly moved at the idolatry which prevailed at Athens, makes an excellent discourse to the philosophers there; who most of them make light of what he says, but some believe, § 40. Paul departs from Athens to Corinth, where he finds Aquila, and Priscilla, and lodging at their house, works as a *tent-maker*, but preaches every sabbath-day to the Jews and Greeks, § 41—
13	53	Silas and Timothy come to him here: and Paul, rejected by the Jews, turns to the Gentiles, many of whom believe and are baptized, *ibid.* Being encouraged in his work by a vision of Christ; Paul continues at Corinth a year and six months, and is rescued by Gallio from the rage of the Jews, §—41. From hence he writes his First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, and that to the Galatians, *ibid* [1].
14	54	Paul departs from Corinth to Cenchrea, where in performance of a vow which he had made, he shaves his head; From thence he sails to Ephesus, where he leaves Aquila and Priscilla, whom he had brought with him from Corinth; and spending but one sabbath there, as he was hastening to the passover, pursues his voyage to Cæsarea, where he lands, and goes up to Jerusalem. There he salutes the church, and having kept the feast, returns to Antioch in Syria, § 42.

Having

Claudius 14.	*Anno Dom.* 54.	Having continued there some time, Paul sets out on *another progress*, (which was the *third* that began from thence since his conversion ;) in which he visits the Asian churches, and particularly those of Galatia and Phrygia, *ibid.*
		Apollos, in the mean time, preaches at Ephesus ; and being farther instructed in the Christian doctrine by Aquila and Priscilla, goes over to Achaia, and preaches at Corinth and other places in that province, § 42.
Nero.	55	While Apollos was watering what Paul had planted at Corinth, Paul comes to Ephesus, where some of John's disciples, being instructed by him, are baptized, and receive the Spirit, § 43.
		Having taught there in the synagogue *three months*, meeting with opposition from the Jews, he separates the disciples, and discourses daily for *two years* in the school of Tyrannus ; performing extraordinary miracles, while the *exorcist* Jews are beaten by a dæmoniac they would have dispossessed ; and preaching the word with such success, that many believe and burn their *magical books*, § 43.
		About this time he writes his First Epistle to the Corinthians, § 44.
3	57	Paul thinks of setting out for Macedonia and Achaia, from whence he would go to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Rome ; but sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, he alters his design, and tarries some time longer in that part of Asia, § 44.
		Demetrius the silver-smith raising a tumult against him, the mob is enraged and cries out for Diana : Paul is advised not to venture among them : The chancellor comes and appeases the tumult, § —44.
		Paul leaving Timothy, who was now returned to him, at Ephesus, departs from thence ; and having passed through Troas in his way, crosses the sea to Macedonia, where he visits the several churches, gathering a contribution as he passed for the poor brethren in Judea, § 45.
		In this journey he writes his Second Epistle to the Corinthians ; as also, probably, his First to Timothy, *ibid.*[b]. [c].
4	58	From Macedonia, he goes on to Greece, where he visits the churches at Corinth, and in the neighbouring parts of Achaia : and having finished his collection, after *three months* abode there, being now ready to embark for Syria, to avoid the Jews he chooses to return by Macedonia, § —45—

From

Nero 4. Anno Dom. 58.

From Corinth in this journey the apostle writes his Epistle to the Romans, *ibid.* [a].

Timothy being returned from Ephesus, accompanies Paul in his journey, with Luke and several others, who sail from Philippi after the passover-week to Troas; where, on the *first day* of the week, Paul celebrates the *eucharist*, and having preached till midnight raises Eutychus to life, who was killed by a fall as he slept, after which he proceeds on his voyage, and comes to Miletus, designing, if possible, to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost, § —45.

At Miletus he sends for the elders of the Ephesian church, and takes his leave of them in an affectionate discourse, § 46.

Paul and his company pursue their voyage, and having sailed by divers places come to Cæsarea where they are entertained at Philip's house; and notwithstanding the repeated warnings that were given him by inspired persons of what the Jews would do to him, he resolutely goes up to Jerusalem, § 47.

Upon his coming to Jerusalem, after an interview with James and the *elders of the church* there, Paul being advised to join with some that had a vow, to obviate the prejudices of the Jews, begins his purification; but is assaulted in the temple by some Jews from Asia, who so incense the people that they would have killed him, if Lysias the Roman Tribune had not come and prevented it, who orders his soldiers to bind him and take him into the castle, § 48.

As they were carrying him away, Paul obtains leave to speak to the people, and gives them an account of his conversion, and of the call he had to preach the gospel, § 49: But upon mentioning his being sent unto the Gentiles, the Jews are enraged and will hear him no farther: The Tribune orders that he should be scourged, which Paul escapes by pleading he is a Roman, § 50.

Paul being brought before the Sanhedrim, occasions a division in the council; and a tumult arising, the Tribune takes him away. Christ appears in a vision to Paul, and tells him he should testify concerning him at Rome. The Jews conspire to assassinate him, which being made known to Paul, the Tribune is informed of their design, § 51.

Lysias sends away Paul under a guard, who bring him by night to Antipatris, and conduct him from thence to Felix the Roman governor at Cæsarea, who orders him into custody till his accusers came, § 52—

Nero 4.	Anno Dom. 58.	
		He is soon followed thither by the high-priest and elders of the Jews; and Tertullus accusing him, the Jews affirm that what he said was true, § —52. But Paul having made his defence, Felix adjourns the cause till Lysias should come down, and only orders him to be kept under a gentle confinement, with liberty for his friends to come to him, § 53.
5	59	On hearing Paul discourse before him and his wife Drusilla, Felix trembles, and puts him off to another opportunity; but though he frequently sent for him afterwards, it was only with a view of getting money from him to release him, § 54—
6	60	When Paul had been in custody two years, Felix, on quitting his government, to gratify the Jews leaves Paul a prisoner, *ibid.*
		Festus succeeding Felix is applied to by the Jews, who renew their complaints against Paul. He makes his defence before Festus, and to avoid his sending him to Jerusalem, appeals to Cæsar, § —54.
		King Agrippa and Bernice coming to visit the new governor, Festus acquaints them with the case of Paul: and, at the King's request, Paul is produced before him in a large assembly, § 55. Being permitted to speak for himself, Paul makes an excellent defence, and gives such an account of himself and his doctrine, that Agrippa is almost persuaded to be a Christian; and the assembly rising, he declares Paul might be set at liberty; if he had not appealed to Cæsar, § 56.
		Paul is shipped from Italy with some other *prisoners*, in custody of a *centurion*, and is attended in his voyage by Luke and Aristarchus: Having suffered great extremity in a storm, Paul is assured by an *angel*, that none of them should perish, which he declares for their encouragement to those that sailed with him, § 57. The storm continues many days, and they at length are *shipwrecked* on the coast of Malta, but all get safe to land, § 58.
		The inhabitants of Malta treat them with great kindness. A *viper* fastens upon Paul, and he receives no harm: Publius' *father* and others are miraculously cured; And after *three months'* stay there, they depart for Rome, § 59—
		Having touched at Syracuse in Sicily, they sail to Rhegium in Italy, and from thence to Puteoli; from whence they go by land to Rome, being met by several *Christian brethren* on the way, § —59.

When

Nero 7.	*Anno Dom.* 61.	
		When they were come to Rome, Paul is allowed to dwell in his own hired house, while the rest of the *prisoners* are delivered to the *Captain of the Guard*, § 59.
		Soon after his arrival Paul has an audience of the Jews, and gives them an account of the *Christian Faith*; but most of them being hardened in their unbelief, he declares, the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, § 60.
9	63	He spends *two years* confined to his own hired house there, preaching the things concerning CHRIST to all that came to him, § 60.
		During this time of his abode at Rome he writes several *Epistles*; particularly, those to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians; as also that to Philemon; and not long after, that to the Hebrews.——His *Epistle* to Titus, and the *Second* to Timothy, seem to be of a later date. *ibid.* z.

CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

NUMBER IV.

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE,

Relating to the particular Time, in which the several Historical Books of the New Testament were written.

SINCE the preceding parts of this work were finished, it has been suggested to me by a much esteemed friend, that it might be proper to say something concerning the *Time of writing* each of these *Sacred Books* on which I have commented. I confess it might justly be expected I should touch on this article; and I heartily wish I were capable of doing it in a more satisfactory manner.

In general, it must be allowed, their being so *universally received*, among those who were most capable of judging, and who were certainly obliged by the highest interest to be accurate in their inquiries, as *written by Holy Men*, who were contemporary with CHRIST himself, and personally concerned in the grand facts they record, plainly shows they must have been of *very early date*, and secures the point which is most important to our faith and edification as Christians.

But as to the *particular year*, in which either of the *Four Gospels*, or the *Acts*, were published, I am of opinion, on the most careful inquiry I have had a capacity and opportunity of making, that we have *no certain foundation* to go upon in determining it.

It is but very little we can learn from the *Books themselves*, with regard to this circumstance.—Matthew does not continue his history quite so low as the *Ascension* of CHRIST.—Mark indeed goes much farther, and speaks of the Apostles *going out and preaching every where*; which implies, that the Gospel had made a considerable progress before his history was concluded.—Luke carries down the Acts, which book was written after *his Gospel*, to the end of the *second year* of Paul's *imprisonment*; which shows it could not be written till about *thirty years* after CHRIST's *Ascension*, but does not certainly prove, it was written quite so soon: And as for the argument from 2 Cor. viii. 18. to prove that *his Gospel* was dispersed *throughout all the churches* with applause, before Paul wrote his *Second Epistle* to the Corinthians, (that is, before the year 57,) I think it very precarious.——John plainly appears to have intended *his gospel* as a supplement to the other three, and consequently it must have been *the last of the four*: But as he mentions nothing which happened *after the Ascension*, though

though he so certainly wrote after Christianity had been widely propagated, (as appears from what has been said of Mark's conclusion,) it will show, that no conjecture can be formed as to *the Date* of one of these Books merely from the last Article recorded in it.

Tradition does indeed say something on this subject, but not in so *determinate*, or always in so *consistent* a manner, as we might have been ready to expect. Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerom, and Augustine are mentioned by almost all the critics and commentators that write upon this head.—They all agree in telling us, what is extremely probable, that Matthew's gospel was *first written:* (Compare *Iren. adv. Hær. lib.* iii. *cap.* 1. *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib.* vi. *cap.* 1.) *Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccles.* and *Aug. de Consen. Evan. lib.* i. *cap.* 1. But in the account of the *year of publication* they differ. Eusebius, (in his Chronicon,) and Theophylact, whom most of the moderns follow, place it but *eight* or *nine years* after the ascension; and Calmet tells us, that almost all the old *Greek manuscripts* have it thus at the end of his Gospel. The Alexandrian Chronicle brings it *seven years* lower: and Irenæus in the fore-cited place, on the authority of a tradition from Papias, (which in itself seems not very probable,) sets it as late as the preaching of Peter and Paul at Rome; which must have been (if they ever preached together there,) more than *fifteen years* after that.—The same author says, that Mark wrote *two years* after Matthew: And hardly any other accounts (so far as I can recollect,) say any thing determinate about it; though several of them speak of Mark's writing his Gospel at the request of St. Peter, (See *Clem. Alex. apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 15. & *lib.* vi. *cap.* 14. *Hieron. Catal. Vir. illustr. in Marc.* and *Epiphan. Hær.* 51.)—I cannot certainly affirm, that Luke had seen both these, though Mr. L'Enfant thinks he strongly intimates it: And I find little in *the Fathers* about the *time* of his writing, more than what Irenæus says, that he digested into writing what Paul preached among the Gentiles; thereby seeming to intimate, that it was after that Apostle had dispatched some considerable part of his ministry. (See *Iren. lib.* iii. *cap.* 1.)—*Eusebius, (Eccl. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 24. & *lib.* vi. *cap.* 14.) *Jerom. (Catal. in Joan.)* and *Irenæus, (lib.* iii. *cap.* 11.) say, that John wrote *his Gospel* in an extreme *old age*, and near the *conclusion* of the *first century*. And this is the substance of what I can learn concerning the light that *Antiquity* throws on this question.

On the whole, it will appear certain concerning *Two of the Gospels*, those of Mark and John, and probably concerning *the third*, I mean that of Luke, (whatever we may conjecture concerning Matthew's) that they were not written till some considerable time *after our Lord's resurrection*. Perhaps this may afford a probable argument, that Matthew's was written *sooner*; since we can hardly suppose, (as Mr. *Le Clerc* observes, *Eccles Hist.* p. 414,) that the Church should be left so long without any authentic account in

in writing of facts so highly important to its edification and its very being *.

As for the *later* Evangelists it might perhaps be urged, that they, who wrote not altogether from their own knowledge, but from the testimony of others, would have an opportunity of making *fuller inquiries* from a greater variety of persons, in consequence of the deliberation they used before the publication of their works. Yet on the other hand, it would on the part of the *original witnesses* so much increase the probability of some *slip of memory*, that on the whole it might something derogate from the *full credibility* of what they have written, were it not for what had been proved above of the *divine superintendency* and *inspiration* with which they were favoured: But when this is allowed, the objection immediately falls to the ground; for in regard to this, we may as entirely credit Moses, when relating facts which happened *two thousand years* before he was born, as Luke, when giving an account of the *shipwreck* he himself suffered at Malta.

I shall close this *Note* with observing, that the longer Christianity had been settled in the world before *these books* were written, the stronger is the argument which we may deduce from the *universal reception* they met with, to prove their *credibility*: Because it plainly shews they were perfectly agreeable to what the churches in one place and another had been taught by the lips of the Apostles; otherwise their inconsistency with those originally received accounts would, no doubt, have been esteemed an invincible reason for rejecting them. And when a due weight is allowed to this thought, it will perhaps appear, that if we should bring *the date* of each book *as low* as any of the *Ecclesiastical Writers* do, (for which I can see no sufficient reason,) yet the cause of Christianity would not, on the whole, lose any thing material by such a concession.

* See Mr. *Le Clerc's Dissertation on the Four Evangelists*, prefixed to his *Harmony*; in which he says as good things as I have any where met with, in favour of the *earliest dates* which any have assigned to *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE ROMANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT ON EACH SECTION.

PREFACE.

AFTER what I have said concerning this work, in the prefaces to the former volumes, I have little to add, but what relates to the manner in which I have endeavoured to conduct this part upon the *Epistles*; which I bless God, he has carried me through, and thank the public they have so kindly encouraged.

As far as I know myself, I have no favourite hypothesis to serve, nor a fondness for any unscriptural phrase; in which so many have, on one side, and the other, made the very being of orthodoxy to consist. I have been disposed to let *scripture* carry me along with it, wherever it naturally leads, rather than resolve it should follow me. Instead of labouring to establish any particular human system, which has always, I fear, a leaven of imperfection attending it; I have endeavoured to keep controversy as much out of sight as possible, and to represent what I verily believe to be the scripture-doctrine, in as simple a manner as I could, and divested of those particular expressions, which some who perhaps are not averse to the main doctrine itself, are ready to rise up against.

But I have not the vanity to hope I have escaped all prejudice. Where it has been manifested, may God pardon it, may my brethren excuse it, and may Divine illumination, more plentifully imparted, preserve others from being led into any errors into which I may have fallen!

I hope it will be deemed no matter of just offence, that I have not always critically examined those interpretations, which, as seeming less natural, I have declined. It had been endless, amidst such a variety of sentiments and explications, to have done this. Some commentators have darkened these epistles so much, that I am sensible St. Paul's writings are best explained, by keeping their glosses as much as possible out of sight. I have therefore frequently passed them over, as if I had never heard or seen them. And if any should impute this to ignorance, I wish they had happened to be in the right; as it had been the saving of a great deal of important time, not to have known the manner in which these writings have been tortured, to serve and save a favourite hypothesis.

It has seemed reasonable to me, when the text and context will bear two interpretations, to prefer that which gives the noblest and most extensive sense, and might make the passage in question most universally useful. And I hope this general apology will be sufficient.

If I have been less sanguine than some would choose, let it be forgiven. I wrote with fear and trembling when I considered the favourable reception which the former volumes had met with, and that these which I now publish might probably follow them over a considerable part of the protestant world; a testimony, I hope, that they breathed a spirit of piety, rather than party; and a reason for caution in these than an air of authority might not mislead, or of rashness offend.

I have endeavoured to guard against excessive length in the *Paraphrase*; and so much the rather, as *St. Paul's* sentences are often so long, that I feared I should otherwise have obscured the sense, rather than illustrated it; and have rendered one of the liveliest writers in the world, (for such undoubtedly *St. Paul* is,) tedious to the reader. To avoid this, I have often broke one sentence of the text into two or three in the *Paraphrase*; and have had a great deal of work in the review, to correct the obscurity, which was the natural consequence of following one leading thought.

I have aimed at making the *Improvements* naturally arise out of, and follow the scriptures illustrated; and by tracing the temper of the *apostles*, under the influence of the great truths they are inculcating, to produce correspondent affections in my own heart. I have endeavoured that the mind of the reader more attentive perhaps at first to the *critical sense*, may be led into the *practical use*, which, plain as it generally is, is indeed the end of all, and alas! the hardest of all to teach. I have preferred plain and useful reflections to those which might have been curious and surprising; and proposed those lessons which I would be most desirous to impress upon my own heart.

When this work is read in the families, or closets, of any who practise *free prayer*, I would desire them to observe how naturally the several *improvements* will furnish them with proper materials for this important and delightful exercise; and by such a use of them, their hearts may be more powerfully impressed with the truths illustrated, and the duties recommended. In this view, I have in some of them suffered my thoughts, while warmed with serious and devout meditation, to breathe forth the language of prayer and praise; which may furnish my fellow christians with a specimen of the manner in which most of them may be converted into direct addresses to God.

Upon the whole, the *design* of this work is not to proselyte men to human names nor to reconcile them to this or the other discriminating phrase; which in the mouth of one may be truth and propriety, and in the mouth of another, falsehood and nonsense; according as any idea, or none, a just, or a wrong idea, may be affixed to them.—Nor is my design to influence christians to worship here, or there—my design is to let into the heart the great sentiments of christianity, and to convey them there as warmly and strongly as I could. And I hope God will graciously reward the faithful care, with which I have consulted the honour of my sacred Guide, by making it the means of spreading true religion, and universal goodness. Amen.

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THIS celebrated epistle was probably written from Corinth, when Paul was travelling through Greece, after finishing his tour in Macedonia, about the *year of our Lord* 58, which was the fourth of the Emperor Nero. The chief arguments to prove this have been already stated in a few words, p. 201, *note* [c]; and they are drawn from comparing Acts xx. 1—4, with Rom. xv. 25—27. xvi. 21. But for the sake of those who may not have the *eighth volume* before them, I shall exhibit them again in my *notes* on *those texts* as they occur in the epistle, and shall observe the same method elsewhere on the like occasions.

The *design* of the epistle has been much more controverted than its *date;* and yet it seems so obvious, that hardly any thing has surprised me more than the different and inconsistent plans which ingenious writers have given of it. I should but confound the reader, as well as swell this preface beyond all due bounds, if I should attempt distinctly to propose and examine them here. Instead of this, I shall therefore content myself with exhibiting (not *my own hypothesis*, for truly it has been my care to have *no hypothesis* at all, but) what upon reading the epistle, without any view but that of following the apostle whithersoever he should lead me, I find to be assured fact; and I will state these contents in as few and as plain words as I can, and so every reader will easily see what this great author *intended*, by seeing what he has *done;* for no doubt he answered his own design.

Now I think it must be evident to every reader of common discernment and attention, that Paul is labouring through all this epistle, " to fix on the minds of the Christians to whom he addresses himself, a deep sense of the excellency of the gospel, and

to engage them to act in a manner agreeable to their profession of it." For this purpose, after a general salutation, (chap. i. 1—7,) and profession of his ardent affection for them, (ver. 8—15,) he declares, that he shall not be ashamed openly to maintain the gospel at Rome; for this general reason, that it is the great and powerful instrument of salvation, both to Jews and Gentiles, by means of faith. (ver. 16, 17.) And then to demonstrate and vindicate its excellency in this view of it, the apostle shews,

I. That the world greatly needed such a dispensation; the Gentiles being fallen into a most abandoned state, (ver. 18, *to the end,)* and the Jews, though condemning others, being themselves no better; (chap. ii. *throughout;)* as notwithstanding some cavils, which he obviates, (chap. iii. 1—8,) their own scriptures testify: (ver. 9—19.) So that there was an universal necessity of seeking for justification and salvation in this method. (ver. 20, *to the end)*

II. That Abraham and David themselves sought justification in such a way as the gospel recommends, that is, by faith, (chap. iv. 1—12,) and that a very illustrious act of it entailed everlasting honour on that great *patriarch* from whom the Jews boasted their descent. (ver. 13, *to the end.)*

III. That hereby believers are brought into so happy a state, as turns the greatest afflictions of life into an occasion of joy. (chap. v. 1—11.)

IV. That the calamities brought on the seed of the *first Adam* by his ever-to-be-lamented fall, are with glorious advantage repaired to all who by faith become interested in the *second Adam.* (ver. 12, *to the end)*

V. That far from dissolving our obligations to *practical holiness,* the gospel greatly increases them by a peculiar obligation, (chap. vi. 1—14,) which the apostle strongly urges upon them. (ver. 15, *to the end)*

By these general considerations, St. Paul illustrates the *excellency of the gospel* in the six first chapters of this epistle, and they must be acknowledged considerations of the highest importance.

There were great numbers of Jews at Rome, many of whom had embraced the gospel; to make them therefore more sensible how glorious a dispensation it was, and to take them off from a fond attachment to the *Mosaical law,* now they were married to Christ by a solemn profession of his religion, (chap. vii. 1—6,) the apostle largely represents how comparatively ineffectual the motives of the *law* were to produce those degrees of obedience and holiness, which by a lively faith in the *gospel* we obtain. (Chap. vii. 7, *to the end.* Chap. viii. 1, 2) And here, in all the remainder of this celebrated chapter, the apostle gives a more particular view of those things which rendered the *gospel* so much more efficacious for this great purpose, *viz.* that of *forming the soul*

soul to holiness, than the *legal œconomy* had been: (chap. viii. ver. 9.) The discovery it makes of the incarnation and death of Christ, (ver. 3, 4); the spirituality of temper to which it calls us, (ver. 4—8); the communication of the sanctifying and comforting influences of the spirit of God, whereby true believers are formed to a filial temper, (ver. 9—17); the views which it exhibits of a state of glory, so great and illustrious, that the whole creation seemed to wait for the manifestation of it, (ver. 18—25); while in the mean time believers are supported under all their trials by the aids of the Spirit, (ver. 26, 27,) and an assurance that all events should co-operate for their advantage, (ver. 28); since God has in consequence of his eternally glorious plan already done so much for us (ver. 29, 30), which emboldens us to conclude, that no accusation shall prevail against us, and no temptations or extremities separate us from his love. (ver. 31, *to the end.)*

As the blessings so affectionately displayed above had been spoken of as the peculiar privileges of those who believed in the gospel, this evidently implied, that as all believing Gentiles had a full share in them, so all unbelieving Jews must necessarily be excluded from them. But as the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews was a topic of great importance, the apostle employs the *ninth*, *tenth*, and *eleventh chapters* in the discussion of it, and so concludes the *argumentative part* of this epistle.

He introduces what he had to say on this interesting subject, by declaring, that he thought most honourably and affectionately of the Jewish nation, (chap. iv. 1—5); and then shows,

1*st*, That the rejection of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the posterity of Isaac too, was an incontestable fact, which the Jews themselves could not but grant to have happened, that is, with respect to the descendants of Ishmael and of Esau. (Ver. 6—13.)

2*ndly*, That the sovereign choice of some individuals to peculiar privileges to which none had any claim; and the sovereign appointment of some, from among many criminals, to peculiar and exemplary punishment; was perfectly consistent both with reason and scripture. (Ver. 14—24.)

3*dly*, That the taking the Gentiles to be God's peculiar people, when Israel should be rejected, had been actually foretold, both by Hosea and Isaiah. (Ver. 25. *to the end.)*

4*thly*, That God hath graciously offered the gospel salvation to Jews and Gentiles, on the same equitable and easy terms; though Israel, by a bigotted attachment to their own law, had rejected it. (Chap. x. *throughout.*)

5*thly*, That, nevertheless, the rejection of Israel, though according to their own prophecies it be general, and attended with astonishing blindness and obstinacy, yet is not total, there still being a number of happy believers among them. (Chap. xi. 1—10.)

6*thly*, That the rejection of the rest is not final, but that the time

time shall come when, to the unspeakable joy of the whole Christian world, the Jews shall in a body be brought into the *church of Christ.* (Ver. 11—31.)

And *lastly*, That in the mean time their obstinacy and rejection is over-ruled to such happy purposes, as serve, through the whole various scene, to display in a glorious manner, the unsearchable wisdom of God. (Ver. 32, *to the end.*)

The *remainder of the epistle* is taken up in a variety of *practical instructions* and *exhortations*, which hardly admit, and indeed do not need so particular an analysis. The grand design of them all is, "to engage Christians to act in a manner worthy of that gospel, the excellency of which he had been illustrating." He more particularly urges,—an entire consecration to God, and a care to glorify him, in their respective stations, by a faithful improvement of their different talents (chap. xii. 1—11);—devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, peace, and meekness, (ver. 12 *to the end*); and in the whole *thirteenth chapter*,—obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, love as the fulfilling of the law, and an universal sanctity of manners, correspondent to the purity of those religious principles which they professed. In the *fourteenth*, and *part of the fifteenth chapter*, he dilates more largely on mutual candour, especially between those Christians who did, and those who did not think themselves obliged in conscience to observe the ceremonies enjoined by Moses; and pleads a variety of most pertinent and affecting considerations in this view (chap. xiv. 1, to chap. xv. 17;) in prosecuting some of which, he is led to mention the extent of his own labours, and his purpose of visiting the Romans; in the mean time recommending himself to their prayers. (ver. 18, *to the end.*) And after many salutations, chap. xvi. 1—16, and a necessary caution against those that would divide the church, he concludes with a benediction and a doxology, suited to the general purport of what he had been writing. (Ver. 17, *to the end.*)

From the *sketch* here given, the reader might form some conjecture of the *rich entertainment* provided for him in this epistle, were he yet a stranger to its more particular contents; but, blessed be God, they are already familiar to almost all who have any regard for the Bible, and take any delight in perusing any part of it. I shall not therefore detain such from Paul's invaluable periods, any longer than whilst I observe, that whereas the interpretation of several phrases which occur here, has very much divided commentators, and laid the foundation for many unhappy contentions, which have been more efficacious to *alienate* the affections of Christians, than all the apostle's arguments, powerful as they are, have been to *unite* them; I am very solicitous to handle this epistle in as *pacific a manner* as possible. I shall therefore, as plainly as I can, give that sense of the disputed phrases which appears to me most

most natural, and briefly suggest, in the *Notes*, the reasons which induce me to understand them in the sense I have preferred. And I hope my readers will be content with this; for were I to produce what interpreters of different opinions have alledged, and canvass the reasons by which they have endeavoured to support their explications and criticisms, I must turn my work into a *Treatise* of *Polemical Divinity*; and so quite change that original plan, which I hope will be found much more entertaining and useful, nor should I, if the scheme were thus changed, be able to comprehend, in *this whole volume*, what I might easily find to offer on *this epistle* alone.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE ROMANS.

SECTION I.

The Apostle begins his letter with a general salutation to the Christians at Rome; in which he transiently touches on some very important doctrines of that gospel, which it was his great design to illustrate and enforce. Rom. I. 1—7.

ROMANS I. 1.

PAUL a servant of Jesus Christ called *to be* an apostle separated unto the gospel of God.

ROMANS I. 1.

SECT. I.

MY dear christian brethren, you receive this epistle from *Paul*, who, though once a bitter persecutor, hath now the honour to style himself *a servant of Jesus Christ*; whose property he humbly professes himself to be, and glories in it, as his highest happiness, to be absolutely at the command and disposal of such a Master. And he is the more sensible of his great obligation to this, as he hath been, in so wonderful a manner, *called*, not only to the fellowship of that holy faith which we all profess, or to the common services of the ministerial office, but even [*to be*] invested with the distinguished character of *an apostle*[a] in the church. He once indeed

Rom. I. 1.

a *Called to be an apostle.*] As the *judaizing teachers* disputed Paul's claim to apostolical office, it is with great propriety that he asserts it in the very entrance of an epistle, in which their principles were to be entirely overthrown. And the attentive reader will observe, with great pleasure, what a variety of other most proper and important thoughts are suggested in other clauses of this short introduction: particularly the views which the Jewish prophets had given of the gospel,

SECT. i.

Rom. I. 1. indeed boasted that he was of the Pharisaic sect separated from the rest of the Jews by ceremonial observances, in which they place so peculiar a sanctity; but he now rejoiceth much more, that he is, by so special an act of condescending grace, *separated to the* glorious and saving *gospel of* the blessed *God*, destined and devoted to its
2 sacred interests; even to that gospel *which, before* it was thus expressly committed to the christian apostles, *was* in a more obscure manner *promised*, and in some measure declared and exhibited, *by his prophets, in the* records of the *holy scriptures*, on which such bright lustre is now thrown by comparing the predictions
3 with the events. I would take every opportunity of promoting in your minds, and my own, the highest regard to this blessed and evangelical dispensation with which God has favoured us; *relating* chiefly *to his* only begotten and beloved *Son Jesus Christ, our* great anointed Saviour, our ever honoured Master and Lord, *who was born* a few years ago *of the seed* and family *of David, according to the flesh*, that is, with respect to his human descent, and so far as flesh was concerned in the constitution
4 of his nature: [*But*] who is also to be regarded by us in a much higher view, as having been *determinately*, and in the most convincing manner, *marked out as the Son of God* [b], *with* the most astonishing display of Divine *power according to* the operation of *the Spirit of holiness* [c], which having originally produced that holy thing which was born of the virgin, exerted its energy, upon him on so many occasions, and especially *in the* triumphant *resurrection from the dead* [d], which amply rolled away all the

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh.

4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

gospel, the descent of Christ from David, the great doctrine o his resurrection, and Deity, and sending the gospel to the Gentiles, the privileges of Christians as the called and beloved of God, and the faith, obedience, and sanctity to which they were obliged in virtue of their profession. Occasion will be given for the like reflections on a thousand other occasions, though the limits of such a work as ours will not allow us so particularly to trace them.

b *Determinately marked out.*] That this is the exact signification of ορισθεντος, Elsner has learnedly proved. Compare Acts xvii. 31.

c *The spirit of holiness.*] It seems to me so little agreeable to the style of scripture in general to call the *Divine nature* of Christ the *Spirit of holiness*, or the *Holy Spirit*, that highly as I esteem the many learned and accurate commentators who have given it this turn, I rather refer it to the operation of the Spirit of God in the production of Christ's body, by which means the opposition between κατα σαρκα and κατα πνευμα will be preserved; the one referring to the materials acted upon, the other to the *Divine* and miraculous *Agent*. Compare Luke i. 35.

d *Resurrection of the dead.*] Εξ αναστασεως νεκρων is rendered by some *resurrection from among the dead*, i. e. leaving many

SECT. i.

the reproach of his cross, and intitled him to the honour of the first-born among many brethren.

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name:

This is that illustrious person *by whom we have received grace and an apostolical mission* [e]; as I esteem it the greatest of favours to be thus employed, and furnished for this important work: and especially since the plan is so extensive, and it is the glorious design of it, *that out of regard to his name, all nations might*, in due time, *be brought to the obedience of* the christian *faith*, and thereby rescued from a state of idolatry and wickedness, formed to the most rational and sublime pleasures in the present life, and fitted for a state of complete and eternal felicity: This is the grand scheme which God is already carrying on in many Gentile nations; *among whom are ye* Romans; illustrious in the world on many accounts, but on none so happy as on this, that ye *also* are now *the called of Jesus Christ*, invited by him into the fellowship of his gospel, and a participation of all its invaluable blessings. And as God hath especially committed this ministration to me, I do therefore, agreeably to the general purport of my office, inscribe this epistle *to all in Rome, who are* to such a degree *beloved of God*, as to be *called* to the privileges and hopes of christianity, [*and*] numbered among that *holy* people who solemnly profess themselves consecrated to his service. And as, in this view, I must think of you with great respect, so I most unfeignedly wish *grace* and favour *to you*, with all kinds of prosperity *and peace, from* the blessed *God*, the great original of all good, who is now become *our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, who is exalted at his right-hand, that he may scatter down all the blessings of providence and grace on his people, and may rule over all things for the good of his church.

Rom. I. 5.

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.

6

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

7

IMPROVE-

of the dead behind; and *Mr. Fleming* has taken great pains to shew, that wherever the compound word ἐξανάστασις (for he considers it as one word) is used, it is always in this sense. See *Flem.* of *Res.* p. 70.—By this resurrection Christ was *declared the Son of God*; but to say he was *constituted the Son of God* by it, seems very unscriptural, since he was proclaimed under that title so long before his resurrection.

e *Grace and an apostolical mission.*] Many would render it *the favour of the apostleship*; but that rendering is not the most literal; and it is certain that Paul did receive *grace* to subdue his heart to the obedience of Christ, and fit him for the ministry of the gospel, before he received his *apostolical commission*, whenever we suppose that commission to have been dated. I therefore choose to keep the clauses thus distinct.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us begin the perusal of this excellent, though in many passages obscure, and difficult epistle, with paying our humble acknowledgments to the *Divine goodness*, that we are favoured with so valuable a part of scripture as that contained in the *apostolical epistles*. How happy are we, who read from the pen of those holy men the sentiments they entertained of christianity, under the *full illumination* of the *sacred Spirit*; — and so learn what were the leading affections which prevailed in their minds. By these letters, they open all their hearts to us, amidst their labours and sufferings, *that we also may have fellowship with them*, in those important things *in which their communion was with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.*

Ver. 1 With particular pleasure let us peruse the writings of Paul, who was, in so peculiar a manner, *called to be an apostle*, and *separated to the gospel of God.* He gloried in the name of *a servant of Christ*, and let us emulate it as the greatest honour. Let us be animated to exert ourselves to the utmost under that cha- 5 racter; since God hath been pleased to *bring us*, though originally *sinners of the Gentiles* to the *obedience of faith*, and to reveal unto us the gospel of his Son; that glorious gospel *predicted by the prophets*, and opened by the apostles, yea, by their Divine 2 Master.

May our hearts adore the great Emanuel, who, though he con- 3 descended to be made of the *seed of David, according to his flesh*, had a Divine nature infinitely superior to it. Let us often reflect 4 on that glorious display of the *power of the Holy Ghost, in his resurrection from the dead*, by which he was *marked out as the Son of God*; and yielding to the force of such a demonstration, let us confide in him, as Jesus our Saviour, and obey him as Christ our Lord.

We are called to partake of the privileges of his people; we 7 belong to the society of those who are eminently *beloved of God*, and who lie under obligations, as they are called an *holy nation, a peculiar people*, to be indeed saints, to be holy in all manner of conversation, as being entirely devoted to God and the Redeemer. May such grace be imparted to us *from God our Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord*, that we may not dishonour the sacred community to which we belong that we may not with millions be cast out at last infamous and abhorred, but may enjoy its most important privileges, in that state of final and everlasting glory in which the kingdom *of the Son of God* shall terminate

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Apostle strongly expresses his affection for his Christian friends at Rome: thereby to introduce, with greater advantage, the considerations he had to lay before them in the process of the epistle. Rom. I. 8—15.

ROMANS I. 8.

FIRST, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

ROMANS I. 8.

I AM now setting myself to write to you, my dear brethren at Rome: and I must, *in the first place*, declare to you, that *I* unfeignedly *thank* that most glorious and excellent Being, who is now become *my* covenant *God* and Father *through Jesus Christ*, by whom we have received the adoption, and bless him *for you all; that your faith* in his invaluable gospel *is* so pure and stedfast, and produces such genuine fruits, that it is declared and *celebrated through the whole world;* and is universally looked upon, by all Christians in this extensive empire, as a most happy presage of the general spread of their holy religion. Such a report as this cannot but excite my praises, as being so agreeable to the tenor of my petitions; *for God, whom I* make it the continual business of my life to *serve with* the greatest integrity and ardour of *my spirit, in the gospel of his Son, is my witness;* and I appeal to him with confidence on so solemn an occasion, as it is he only who can judge of the fact; *how incessantly I make mention of you* Romans, when I bow my knee before him in solemn seasons of devout retirement; *Always intreating in my prayers* the permission of his gracious providence, *to come unto you, if by any means now at length*, after so long a delay, *I may have a prosperous journey* to you, *by the will of God;* on whose blessing I am sensible the prosperity of all our ways depends, and to whose wise determination I desire to submit all my schemes and purposes, even those which are formed with the most affectionate regard to the good of his church. Nevertheless, so far as may consist with this due resignation, I am humbly importunate with him on this head; *for I desire greatly to see you*, not from any curiosity which the grandeur and magnificence of your city excites, nor from any prospect of personal advantage that I might receive from the most

SECT. ii.

Rom. I. 8.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.

9

10 Making request (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you.

10

11 For I long to see you,

11

SECT. ii.

most considerable of you, in the greatest distinction of circumstances, but *that I may impart to you some spiritual gift*, by the laying on of my hands in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ[a]; *that* by the farther experience which you may then have of the operations of the Holy Spirit, as well as the edification to be received from what discourses may pass between us, *you may be established* in your Christian faith, and fortified against all temptation, either to renounce or dishonour it: *That is*, in other words, [*I desire*] that *while I am among you, we may be comforted together*, as I have great reason to believe that we shall, *by* the exercise of *the mutual faith, both of you and me;* while I am communicating and you receiving these blessings, and those correspondent graces are working on each side, which I doubt not will be for my improvement, as well as for yours[b].

Rom. I. 11.

12

you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established:

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 *And*, while I thus express my desire of an interview with you, *I would not have you ignorant* my dear *brethren, that I have often been proposing* and contriving *to come to you; though* I *have hitherto*, by one means or another, *been hindered.* I have, I say, long meditated and desired the journey, *that I might have some fruit* of my ministerial and apostolical labours *among you also; even as* I have already had from the many churches I have planted and watered *among the rest of the Gentiles.* Which I mention, not by any means as boasting of what I have done; *for* I know, that in the circumstances

13

14

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to

[a] *Impart to you some spiritual gift.*] Bos interprets this, of preaching the gospel, which was a Divine kind of food by which their souls might be strengthened; and which he, as with the richest liberality, was willing to *impart* and distribute among them, But as *spiritual gifts*, in the language of St. Paul, have generally another signification, (compare 1 Cor. xii. 1, 4, 9. xiv. 1, 12.) and it was the particular office of the apostles to bestow miraculous gifts, by the laying on of their hands, I have taken the passage in that view; and though it is reasonable to suppose the Christians now at Rome had some share of these endowments, chap. xii. 5—7, it is highly probable, that on Paul's arrival among them, they might receive them in much greater abundance. The great temptations which the inhabitants of Rome were under, both to infidelity and immorality, would make such assistances more desirable, and the apostle more solicitous for such an interview.——As for the words εν υμιν, it makes the construction much plainer to read them before συμπαρακληθηναι, as they can by no means, otherwise, have any force at all They must, therefore, as *L'Enfant* has well noted, be rendered *being among you.*

[b] For my improvement, as well as for yours.] This thought, so full of respect to his Christian friends at Rome, is suggested with great *delicacy* and *address;* and it is very reasonable to suppose that every new instance, in which *miraculous gifts* were communicated by the laying on the hands of any of the apostles, would be a source of new edification and establishment to these holy men; as being so evident a token of the Divine presence with them, and a new and solemn seal set to the commission they had received.

c *The*

to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise.

stances in which Christ has placed me, considering the charge he honoured me with, and the mercy he hath extended to me, *I am*, in the strictest justice, *a debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians, both to the learned and the ignorant*[c]. Duty and gratitude bind me to do my best, to promote the conversion and salvation of men of every nation and rank, of every genius and character. SECT. ii. Rom. I. 14.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Therefore, according to my 15 weak *abilities*, and the opportunities which God may give me, *I am ready* and desirous[d] *to preach the gospel to you also that are at Rome*, though it be the capital of the world, a place of so much politeness and grandeur, and a place likewise where it might seem peculiarly dangerous to oppose those popular superstitions to which the empire is supposed to owe its greatness and felicity: yet still, at all events, I am willing to come and publish this Divine message among you; though it should be at the expence of my reputation, my liberty or life.

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY is the church of *Christ*, when its ministers are thus conscious of the *excellency of the gospel*, and thus earnestly desirous, in the midst of reproach, persecution, and danger, to extend its triumphs; when they can thus appeal to God, that it is *with their spirit that* they *serve him in the gospel of his Son.* Ver. 15

This will give them a largeness of heart well becoming their office. Devotion will then flourish in their secret retirements, 9 as well as be maintained by them in public assemblies; and the 10 concerns of the churches, and sometimes of far distant churches, will have a place in their thoughts and prayers at such solemn seasons.

May they ever remember, that as the servants of *Christ*, they are to be the friends of mankind; and that their Master has laid such obligations upon them, that for his sake they are *debtors* to the whole world, in every office of Christian friendship, and, especially as to any *spiritual gift* which by their ministration they may 14 be

c *The learned and the ignorant.*] L'Enfant justly observes, that σοφοι often signifies *learned*, (compare 1 Cor. i. 20, &c.) and consequently ανοητοι must signify *ignorant*, or those whose understandings had not been improved by cultivation. And it is well known that the *literati*, or sages of antiquity, were anciently called σοφοι. See ver. 22. 1 Cor. ii. 4. iii. 20, and σοφια plainly signifies *learning*; Mat. xiii. 54. Mark vi. 2. Acts vi. 22.

d *Ready* and desirous.] *Raphelius* shews that προθυμος expresses not only a *readiness*, but, in some cases, an *eagerness of desire*. *Not. ex Herod.*

SECT. ii. be instrumental in imparting. The more they exert themselves in such services, the more will their own *faith* and *comfort*, as well 12 as that of their people, be *confirmed*.

But in whatever station we are, let us be forming schemes for the service of God, and good of men; projecting our journies and visits on that plan, yet always with a becoming sense of our 10 dependence on the smiles of heaven, for prosperity and success; and as dutiful children, referring it to the infinitely superior wisdom of our heavenly Father, to put a negative, at his sacred pleasure, upon those purposes which lay nearest to our hearts, and in which we most sincerely intend his glory.

SECT. III.

The Apostle declares his readiness boldly to preach the gospel at Rome, supported by a sense of its excellency; to illustrate which, he shews that the world greatly needed such a dispensation. And first he introduces a discourse of the abandoned state into which the Gentiles were fallen. Rom. I. 16—32.

ROMANS I. 16.

SECT. iii. I HAVE told you (ver. 15,) that I am ready and desirous to preach the gospel at Rome, though the capital city of the world; and indeed there Rom. I. 16. is nothing that I more earnestly wish than opportunities of bearing the most public testimony to it: *for*, with whatever contempt that sacred dispensation, and they who publish it, may be treated on account of the circumstances and death of its founder, the character of its ministers, and the nature and tendency of its doctrines; *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*, but rather glory in it. And I have great reason to do it: *for*, while other methods, intended to promote the reformation and happiness of mankind, have been all ineffectual; *it* has clearly appeared that this *is the power of God for* complete and eternal *salvation, to every one that believeth*. It contains the most glorious display of the Divine power, efficaciously exerted for this important purpose, and operating in favour of every one who cordially embraces it. Thus salutary is it *to the Jew*, who is far from being above the need of it, and to whom, by the especial command of our Lord, it is to be *first* preached and proposed[a], wherever its ambassadors

ROMANS I. 16.

FOR I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

[a] *To the Jew first*, &c.] There is a noble *frankness*, as well as very *comprehensive sense*, in these few words of the apostle; by which, on the one hand, he strongly

sadors come; yet not to be limited to him, but proclaimed *also to the Greek*, and the Roman, and Gentiles of every nation under heaven; who are all, with equal freedom, invited to partake its important benefits. And it is admirably adapted to secure this great and blessed end; *for in it the righteousness of God*[b] *by faith*, that is, the method which God hath contrived and proposed for our becoming righteous, (Isa. lvi. 1,) by believing his testimony, and casting ourselves on his mercy, *is revealed to* our *faith*[c], and most clearly exhibited, as the great object of it. *As it is written* in the prophet Habakkuk, chap. ii. 4. "*The just shall live by faith*[d]:" and as good men were then delivered from the ruin which involved others, by trusting to and acting upon the Divine declaration; so now the like principle of faith, receiving and embracing this great discovery which God hath made of his mercy in Christ, secures our life and salvation. And as in this view it is well worthy of our regard, so there is an absolute necessity of its being attended to; *for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven*[e]: by many singular interpositions of

SECT. III.

Rom. I. 16.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

17

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungod-

18

strongly insinuates to the Jews, their *absolute need* of the gospel, in order to salvation; and on the other, while he declares to them, that it was also to be preached to the Gentiles, he tells the politest and greatest of these nations, to whom he might come as an ambassador of Christ, both *that their salvation* also *depended* upon receiving it, and that the *first offers* of it were every where to be made to the despised Jews.

b *The righteousness of God.*] Δικαιοσυνη Θεω plainly signifies, in several passages of this epistle, not the *essential righteousness of God's nature*, but the *manner of becoming righteous*, which God hath appointed and exhibited in the gospel. Compare chap. iii. 21, 22; x. 3. Compare Phil. iii. 9; Mat. vi. 33. And the phrase may perhaps have the same sense in several passages of the Old Testament. See Isa. xlvi. 13; li. 5, 6, 8; lvi. 1. Mr. Mace generally renders it *the divine justification*; yet cannot always render δικαιοσυνη so.

c *By faith, is revealed to faith.*] I would connect εκ πιστεως with Δικαιοσυνη, and suppose εις πιστιν to be governed of αποκαλυπτεται, thinking the transposition easier than the interpretation given by many others, as if it implied its being *wholly by faith*, as Mr. Mace renders it; or *going on from one degree of faith to another*: for though it is true that this is the case, I find no example in which the phrase is used in either of these senses. Those which Mr. Locke produces to justify the former of these interpretations, (viz. chap. vi. 19; and 2 Cor. iii. 18,) being by no means exactly parallel. And it is so plain, that εκ πιστεως in the close of this verse signifies *by faith*, that I wonder it should have been rendered so differently in the former clause.

d *As it is written, The just shall live by faith.*] The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the destruction to come upon Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, observes how different the behaviour and states of good and bad men would be. *The sinner's heart would be vainly lifted up* to his destruction, while trusting to his own wisdom and power, (and accordingly prince and people became the sacrifices of this foolish self-confidence:) whereas *the righteous*, the truly good man, would *preserve his life by believing* the Divine declarations, and acting according to them; and thus under the gospel, he that believes shall live. Some would render it, *The just by faith shall live*, or he shall live who is *justified by faith*; but however this might suit the *Greek phrase*, it seems less agreeable to the *Hebrew*, from whence it is taken.

e *For the wrath of God is revealed,* &c.] Com-

godliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

SECT. iii. of Divine providence, and especially by the most express declaration of the sacred oracles, which teach us to look on the grand and final revelation of it as nearly approaching. And the terrors of this wrath are apparently levelled *against all impiety and unrighteousness of men who* wickedly *restrain the truth in unrighteousness;* when that heaven-born Captive would exert its energy upon their minds, and urge them to obey its dictates. This is, more or less, the generally prevailing character; and it exposes men to a sentence, the terrors of which, if they were well understood, would soon drive them, with the greatest solicitude, to seek their refuge in that gospel, the tidings of which they now so arrogantly despise.

Rom. I. 18.

19 Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

19 The sad character I hinted at above, of restraining and imprisoning the truth in unrighteousness, is more general than mankind are aware. We find it not only among those who have enjoyed the benefit of a revelation from God, but in all the Gentile nations. *For* the main fundamental principles of *what is*, by any means *to be known of God*, that is, that he is the great Original of all, *is manifest among them, for God hath shewed it to them*, by a light universal as the sun. *For those things of him which are invisible, are*, and have been *from the* very *creation of the world*, not only intimated, but *being duly attended to*[f], *clearly seen by the things which are made;* the whole system of which bears such eminent signatures of the great Artificer, as loudly to proclaim his name and attributes, *even his eternal power and divinity*[g]; *so that* if any of the Gentile nations neglect to trace

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Commentators differ much in fixing the connection of these words.—Some have considered this verse as another reason why he was not ashamed of the gospel; because it contained so awakening a declaration of the wrath of God against sin, and by that means had a most powerful tendency to awaken men's consciences, and save their souls: in which view, some treating the particle γαρ as an expletive, have rendered it, *there the wrath of God is revealed.* And Mr. Locke brings it nearly to the same, where he explains it as a reason why Paul was so ready to preach the gospel at Rome.—But the connection hinted in the *paraphrase*, seems most *rational* and *natural.* The sentences in Paul's writings often run into each other.

f *Being duly attended to.*] Νοουμενα seems to have this signification, and to be, as it were, included in a *parenthesis;* so that τοις ποιημασι is governed of καθορᾶται.

g *Divinity.*] It is observable that *Augustine (Civ. Dei,* viii. 1.) nicely distinguishes between Θεοτης, and Θειοτης the word here used; maintaining that the one signifies *deity,* or *divine nature;* the other *divinity,* or *divine majesty* and *glory:* and if there be that distinction, the latter word is apparently more proper here, as divine glory results from that eternal power which is comprehended in the divine nature.

h *Know-*

SECT. iii.

trace it, with reverence, love, and obedience, *they are without excuse*, and would be destitute of every just or plausible apology for themselves, if he should enter into judgment with them: Rom. i. 21.

21 Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Because knowing God[h], as the great Former of all, and a Being of supreme and incomparable perfection, *they have not* adored and *glorified [him] as God* their Maker, *neither were* duly *thankful*[i] to him as their great and constant Benefactor; *but* acted as if they had neither opportunity nor capacity of acquainting themselves with him. This has generally been the character of the Gentiles, without excepting those of the politest ages and most learned nations. Instead of setting themselves to enquire into the will of the supreme Being, and with becoming gratitude and zeal devoting themselves to his service; *they became vain* and foolish in their boasted *reasonings*[k], intangling themselves with a thousand unprofitable subtilties, which only tended to alienate their souls from every sentiment of true religion; *and their unintelligent heart*, instead of being enlightened by these sophistries, *was* more and more *involved in darkness*, and rendered impenetrable to the simplicity, of the most important truths. So that

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

22 *professing themselves to be* wise, far beyond the common pitch, assuming and glorying in the titles of *sages* or wise men, at least in that of lovers of wisdom[l], *they became fools* and idiots, degrading, in the lowest and most infamous manner, the reason which they so arrogantly pretended

h *Knowing God.*] Some understand it as if he had said, *Whereas they might have known God;* but I think what Paul charges upon the philosophers is, that though they *actually knew* there was one supreme God, they neglected him, to conform (for low and base considerations) to the established idolatry; which was really the case, to their aggravated guilt and condemnation; as appears from most of the passages in which the Pagan writers bear a testimony to the *doctrine of the Unity;* a specimen of which may be seen in Dr. *Sykes's Connect.* chap. xiv. p. 364—383; Dr. *Ab. Taylor, of Faith*, p. 12—17, *not.*; and *Cudworth's Intellect. System*, chap. iv. § 10—31, especially § 19—28.

i *Neither were thankful.*] It is worthy our observation, that *gratitude to God* is here put for the *whole of religion;* and no principle can be nobler, and none can be stronger or more extensive.

k *Vain in their reasonings*, εματαιωθησαν εν τοις διαλογισμοις αυτων.] Mr. Locke illustrates this by the stupid folly of *their idolatry*, 2 Kings xvii. 15, 16; Acts xiv. 15. But I rather think the word Διαλογισμοις refers to the perplexing *sophistry of the philosophers.* I have often thought Lucretius one of the most remarkable illustrations of the character here drawn.—What *vain reasonings*, and how dark a heart, in the midst of the most pompous profession of *oracular wisdom.*

l *Professing themselves.*] Φασκοντες ειναι σοφοι, seems just equivalent to Xenophon's φασκοντας φιλοσοφειν; which so evidently refers to the pride they took in the title *of lovers of wisdom.* See *Raphel in loc.*

m Beetley

SECT. iii.

tended to improve, and almost to engross. *And* as this was evident in a variety of other vices, in which the philosophers of heathen nations joined with the vulgar, so particularly in the early, and almost universal prevalence of idolatry amongst them, by which *they changed the glory of the* immortal, *incorruptible* and eternal *God*, even all the majestic splendors in which he shines forth through earth and heaven, *into the representing image of* mortal and *corruptible man*; which, how elegantly soever it might be traced, was a great and insufferable degradation, had their folly proceeded no farther. But not content with this, they set up, as emblems of deity, and objects of worship, brutes *and* their images, *birds and four-footed animals, and* even such vile *reptiles* as beetles, and various kinds of reptiles which creep on the dust[m].

Rom. I: 23.

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

24 This was such scandalous and pernicious superstition, that it is no wonder that *God* should in righteous judgment withdraw from those who introduced and encouraged it. He *therefore* not only left them to sink lower and lower in these absurd methods of worship, but also *delivered them up to* the vilest *uncleanness, in* [*gratifying*] *the* detestable *lusts of their own heart*; which grew more and more outrageous and enormous when the restraint of his common influences was thus withdrawn from their minds.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Thus he left them *to dishonour their bodies among themselves*, as much as they had before dishonoured their rational faculties by such senseless idolatries. This was so prevalent an evil, that even many of them *who* knew much better, and had in their own minds sounder apprehensions of things, yet from mere secular motives, suppressed that better knowledge, and conformed to popular superstitions and follies, and thereby *changed the truth of God*, the true doctrines of his nature, and genuine institutions of his worship, *into a lie*[n], into abominable idolatries, founded on the falsest representations of God, and often supported

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who

m Beetles and serpents.] Of this amazingly stupid, yet prevalent idolatry, the *worship of serpents*, see *Jenk. Reas. of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 246—248; *Tennison of Idol.* chap. xiv. p. 352—354; *Owen on Serp.* chap. iv. and *v. Stillingf. Orig. Sac.* p. 516, &c.

n *Changed the truth of God into a lie.*] Elsner takes great pains to shew that the *truth of God* here signifies *what he really was*; and a *lie*, a *false representation*. See *Elsner's Observ.* Vol. II. p. 11. It is well known that idols are often called *lies*. Isa. xliv. 20. Jerem. iii. 23. xiii. 25. xvi. 19.

To

who is blessed for ever. Amen.

ported by a train of artful forgeries; *and*, upon the whole, they *worshipped and served*, with religious homage and solemn devotion, *the creature, to the neglect of the* great *Creator; who*, however basely and ungratefully neglected by men, *is* surrounded with the perpetual homage of the heavenly world, and *blessed for ever. Amen.* May he ever be held in the highest veneration, by all his creatures in heaven and earth, thoughout all succeeding ages.

SECT. iii.

Rom. i. 25.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

Therefore, I say, because of this inexcusable neglect of the ever-blessed *God*, he *abandoned them to the most infamous passions; for* even *their women*, from whom the strictest modesty might reasonably have been expected, *changed the naturul use* of the other sex *to that which is against nature* [o]. 26

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

And likewise their males leaving the natural use of the female, have been inflamed with the most scandalous and abominable *desires towards each other, male with males perpetrating that which is most shameful* to mention, and detestable to think of, *and receiving in themselves the just recompense of their error*, in that stupidity and degeneracy of mind to which they were evidently left. 27

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient:

And thus, upon the whole, *as they were not solicitous to* [p] *retain God in their knowledge*, nor to propagate suitable conceptions of him, or address him by proper acts of rational and pure devotion, *God delivered them over to an undiscerning mind, to do things most inexpedient* [q] and enormous; as he cannot more dreadfully punish one sin than by giving up the offender to more. 28

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers,

And accordingly, universal depravation and corruption seized and possessed them; and the whole series of their discourses and actions shewed that they were *full of all* manner of *injustice, lewdness, mischief, covetousness*, and *malignity*; perpetually injuring each other, and drawing damage and misery on themselves; while they were *filled* and intoxicated *with* every imaginable vice, *envy, murder, contention, fraud*, the *inveteracy of* all *evil* and pernicious 29

o *To that which is against nature*] Many horrible illustrations of this may be seen in Bos, *Exercit. in loc.*

p *Were not solicitous.*] Εδοκιμασαν imports a *concern to bring things to a trial or touchstone*, which this translation expresses much better than ours, which coldly renders it, they liked not.

q *Things most inexpedient.*] The original expression, is a meiosis, to express things most detestable; as αισχια εργα signifies all the inhumanities which Achilles most ungenerously practised on the corpse of Hector. Compare *Wisd.* xiv. 22—27. See *Bos in loc.*

r *Mischief,*

SECT. iii.

pernicious *habits*[r], which no sense of decency or regard to reputation or interest could reform. Instead of entertaining those friendly regards to each other which common humanity might have taught them, they were *whispering* something against those that were present, as well as *backbiting* such as were absent; and being *haters of God*, discontented with his government and disaffected to his rule as a righteous and holy Being, who could not but be highly displeased with their abominations, they were *violent* and overbearing[s] in their behaviour to each other, *proud* of what they had, and arrogant *boasters* of what they had not; ingenious *inventors of evil* and vicious *things*, who piqued themselves on making some new discoveries in the arts of sensuality or mischief. And it is no wonder that when there was such an impious disposition to rebel against God, they should also be *disobedient to* earthly *parents*: And that they should act in so wild and unaccountable a manner, as to seem to be *without* the natural *understanding* of men; *implacable* in their resentments, without *natural affection*,[t] even to their own children in some instances, and to their parents in others. And when a reconciliation was attempted, and mutual engagements entered into with the highest solemnity, they were, on any present appearance of advantage, presently for *breaking* those pacific *treaties*, and *unmerciful* in pursuing their schemes of cruelty and revenge, whenever they got any new opportunity of doing it. This was the character which generally prevailed in the heathen world, *who, though they knew the righteous judgment of God*[u], and though their consciences, as well as the

Rom. I. 30.

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31

31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.

32

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy

r *Mischief, malignity, inveteracy.*] According to some acute commentators, πονηρια signifies doing mischief, κακια, a malicious temper, and κακοηθια a custom of repeating it frequently.

s *Violent* and overbearing.] Τυραννος is properly opposed to σωφρων, and expresses the character of a man who is resolved to gratify his own appetites and passions, and to pursue what he apprehends his own interest, right or wrong; without at all regarding those inconveniences or sufferings which he may thereby bring upon others.

t *Without natural affection.* Ασοργους may include the absence of both *parental* and *filial affection*. The custom of exposing new-born infants, which prevailed so generally in the *heathen world*, and that among polite nations, and persons, in other respects not destitute of humanity, is a most striking instance of the truth of this assertion: as that of *killing their aged parents* also was of the counterpart.

u *Who, though they knew the righteous judgment of God*, &c.] The Clermont copy inserts the words ουκ ποιουν after επιγνοντες; agreeable to which reading, Mr. Locke renders it, *who, though they acknowledge the rule of right* [δικαιωμα] *prescribed*

thy of death,) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

the lessons of their wisest teachers, told them, *that they who do such things* as these *are worthy of death;* yet *not only do these things* themselves, *but* also look with complacency upon, and *agree together with those that do them;* forming confederacies to countenance and support each other, and impudently out-braving those who should presume to bear testimony against them. SECT. iii. Rom. I. 32.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHEN we dwell on the representation of that character which this humane and candid apostle gives us of the heathen world, with regard to their idolatries, impieties, and other immoralities, what reason have we to bless God for the *dispensation of the gospel;* which hath wrought so effectually for the reformation of thousands, who might otherwise have been as deeply drenched in all these enormities as the vilest of them! For we know, that it was not the barbarous nations alone, but some of the politest, who in neglect of all the opportunities they had of knowing better, and in opposition to that better knowledge which some of them actually obtained, were often distinguished for the superstition of their worship, and the scandal of their lives; so that the chief illustrations of this sad subject are to be borrowed from Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Ver. 21

Let us learn, not only to guard against the vices for which the heathens are here branded, (knowing that the practice in us will be yet more criminal,) let us cultivate the opposite virtues of *justice* and *temperance*, *benevolence* and *contentment*, *peace* and *charity*, *sincerity* and *humility;* and let us cherish the *natural tender affections.* If offences arise, let us always be ready *to hearken to terms of reconciliation*, and faithfully *observe our engagements;* taking the greatest heed, that knowing so clearly as we do *the judgment* 29—31 32

prescribed them by God, and discovered by the light of nature, *yet did not understand that they who do these things are worthy of death, and therefore—συνευδοκουσι live well with those who do them* "that is, converse "with them, without any marks of disesteem and censure; whereas the Jew, who condemns the evils which he practises, is much more inexcusable;" so connecting this verse with the second chapter. But I neither think the authority of the Clermont copy, by any means sufficient to justify our admitting this reading, nor can imagine it would make a good sense: for surely if they knew a rule of right prescribed by God, they could not be ignorant that the violation of it would expose them to punishment; and it is evident in fact, from numberless passages in *heathen moralists*, that they were not ignorant of it. The *vulgar Latin* does indeed partly follow this peculiar reading; but they add, *non solum qui faciunt, sed qui consentiunt facientibus*, "not only they who commit these crimes, but they who agree with others that commit them;" which I think makes a sense much preferable to Mr. Locke's, though by no means agreeable to the *original*.—It seems here to be implied, that to look with complacency on the vices of others, is one of the last degrees of degeneracy.

SECT. iii. *judgment of God*, we do not, by any means, give countenance to, and seem to join in a confederacy with sinners.

Ver. 32 Let us bless God for all the capacities and opportunities he hath given to the heathen nations of coming to the knowledge of himself *by the things that are made*, which declare *his eternal power and Godhead*, and render *inexcusable* both atheists and idolaters among 19--20 them. But when we recollect how many either entirely lost the truth, or *imprisoned it in unrighteousness*, let us be most affectionately thankful for so superior a light; for that gospel which is 16 *to every believer*, without exception *the power of God for salvation*, and which *declareth the righteousness of God*, as the object of our faith. May we properly receive it, and so escape the terrors of that *Divine wrath which is revealed from heaven against all im-* 18 *piety and unrighteousness of men.*

To this revelation let us give the most attentive heed, and be much upon our guard against those vain and sophistical *reasonings*, to which they, who knowing God, *neglect to glorify him as God*, are so ready to fly; lest we approve ourselves *fools* in proportion to the degree in which we *profess to be wise*, and provoke God to 22 *give us up to an injudicious mind*, and to leave us to that reciprocal influence which evil principles and evil actions have to render 28 each other more inveterate and incurable.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle discourses more particularly of those who knew their duty, and yet acted contrary to it; and of the condemnation they must expect from God; that so he might properly introduce the the particular charge he had to advance against the Jews, as above all others, answering that character. Rom. II. 1—16.

ROMANS II. 1.

SECT. iv. I HAVE just been speaking of the great and aggravated guilt of those, who not only do things which they know to be displeasing to God, and evil in themselves, but also agree together to countenance those that do them. And it may be, some who know they are not of that number[a], but, on one principle or another, bear their

Rom. ii. 1.

ROMANS II. 1.

THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou

[a] Some who know that they are not of that number.] There is a greater delicacy in the *apostle's transition* here, than most commentators have imagined. From what he had before said, to prove the most abandoned and ignorant of the heathens inexcusable in their wickedness, he justly infers, that the crimes of those who had such knowledge of the truth as to condemn the vices of others, were proportionably yet more inexcusable. This was evidently the case with the Jews: but he does not directly speak of them till the 9th verse; but draws the inference at first in such general terms as might also comprehend Gentile *philosophers*, and all others

thou that judgest doest the same things.

their testimony against the prevailing immoralities of those about them, may imagine themselves secure and happy. I must, *therefore*, argue from the premises just laid down, that *thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest*, and pretendest to pass sentence upon others: *for* I know what the character of such generally is, and I know that the very best of them all have their blemishes and faults; and therefore I may say, that *wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou who judgest, doest the same things* in many instances[b], and consequently art convicted out of thine own mouth. *For we know* in general, *that the judgment of God is according to truth* and justice, *against* all *those who do such things*, however they may behave towards their fellow-sinners. *And* canst thou then, by the sentence which thou passest upon others, think to evade that which goeth forth against thyself? Or *reasonest thou thus, O man*, whosoever thou art, whether Pagan philosopher or Jewish teacher, *who judgest those that do such things, while thou doest them thyself, that thou shouldest escape the judgment of God? Or* is thy heart so obdurate, as to make light of those judgments which thou must certainly meet, because they are not immediately executed: and *doest thou* indeed *despise the riches of his gentleness and forbearance, and long-suffering*[c], exercised towards thee for such a length of time, so as to think it may be safely trifled with? Surely if thou dost, thou art shamefully ignorant indeed, as *not knowing, that the* goodness and *gentleness of God leadeth thee to repentance*. He bears with thee, that thou mayest prevent the threatened blow, by humbling thyself before him, and forsaking thy sins. *But* this day of mercy and grace has its limits; and however

SECT. iv.

Rom. II. 1.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things.

2

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

3

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

4

5 But after thy hardness

5

others who contradicted the moral instructions which they themselves gave.

b *Doest the same things.*] Dr. Whitby shews, by many very proper quotations, chiefly from Josephus, that the Jews of that age were guilty of many of those crimes which had been enumerated above. See *Joseph. de Bello Judaic. lib.* v. *cap.* 13, [al. 16,] § 6, and *lib.* vii. *cap.* 8, [al. 16,] § 1. *Edit. Havercamp.*

c *Gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.*] Mr. *Blackwall (Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 306,) enlarges on the great emphasis of these words in the original. He thinks χρηστότης signifies *benevolence* and *generosity* in the general, ανοχη *mercy* in the proposals of pardon and happiness to fallen creatures, and μακροθυμια *patience* in attending so long on such obstinate wretches: I have given what I take to be the exactest rendering of each; but did not judge it convenient to protract the *paraphrase of so lively a passage*, by attempting in *many words* to illustrate it.

SECT. IV.

Rom. II. 5.

however thou mayest flatter thyself now, the consequence will soon appear fatal, and thou wilt find, to thine unutterable confusion, that *by this hardness and impenitence of thy heart*, thou *art treasuring up to thyself* a more abundant store of *wrath, in the day of* final *wrath, and* of that *revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, which is now, as it were, under a veil, and so disregarded because unseen; but it shall then be
6 set forth to view, in all its lustre and terror. The Divine Being is indeed a most gracious and indulgent Father; but be it known unto thee, that he is also the wise and holy Governor of the universe; *who will recompense every man according to his works*, in the final distribution of good and evil, how unequal soever his present dispensa-
7 tions may seem. *To those* generous and elevated souls, *that* are not discouraged by present difficulties, nor ensnared by the allurements of the world, but amidst them all, *by a patient* and persevering *course of well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality*, he will graciously render the great prize they pursue, even *eternal*
8 *life. But to the* perverse and ungrateful *children of contention*[d], *who* quarrel with the merciful dispensation that should have saved them, and *are* obstinately *disobedient to the* dictates of *truth, but* servilely *obedient to the* usurped and base tyranny of *unrighteousness*, perversely opposing the evidence of true religion, because they are averse to its practical design, [*he will render*] a quite different portion. For them is reserved all that can be imagined most dreadful; *indignation* shall be conceived, *and wrath* shall
9 break forth against them; The sharpest *tribulation*, the most hopeless *and* inextricable *anguish* and despair[e], which shall be poured out in a torrent

ness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation, and wrath;

9 Tribulation and anguish upon every soul

d *Children of contention.*] Mr. Locke thinks that *patience* in the former verse, and *contention* here, refer to the malignant enmity with which the Jews endeavoured to exclude the Gentiles from the church. Compare Gal. i. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5; but it seems much better to explain it in a latitude which shall indeed include this, as one instance of obstinacy and perverseness, without contracting that extensive and important sense which our interpretation gives. And that the *contention* of the Gentiles is included here, evidently appears by the conclusion of the sentence.

e *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*, &c.] Here seems to be a reference to those expressive words, Psal. lxxviii. 49, when speaking of the Egyptians, it is said, *he cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble.* And it may finely intimate, that the Jews would, in the day of vengeance, be more severely punished than even their Egyptian enemies were, when God made their plagues so wonderful. Στενοχωρια properly signifies *straitness*; and is used by Xenophon to signify a narrow way, that cannot be passed. See *Raphel.*

soul of man that doth evil, of the Jews first, and also of the Gentile;

rent of unmingled misery, even *upon every soul of man who worketh* that which is evil. This shall be rendered *to the Jew* in the *first* place[f], who far from escaping by his superior advantages *and* privileges, will, by the abuse of them, be obnoxious *to* distinguished wrath. Nor shall *the Greek* escape, who shall be judged according to the light he hath enjoyed, or the opportunity he had of enjoying more. *But*, as I said before, and repeat it with pleasure, as the more delightful part of the subject, which I love to dwell upon; *glory, honour, and peace* [*shall be*] recompensed *to every one who worketh good; first to the Jew*, who stands fairer (in virtue of the Divine revelation he enjoys,) for distinguished degrees of it, as well as receives the first messages of this salvation; *and then to the Greek*, who, if he exclude not himself, shall not be exempted from his proper share. *For there is no* partial *acceptance of persons with God*[g], which should engage him on account of outward condition, or lineal descent, to spare obstinacy and wickedness in a Jew, or to reject the humble faith and obedience of a Gentile. And he will fully display this impartiality of administration in the great day of universal judgment; *for as many as have sinned without the* Mosaic *law*[h], and have continued impenitent in their crimes, *shall without the law perish*; the light of nature, without the knowledge of revelation, being sufficient to condemn them. *And as many as have sinned under* the instruction and obligation of *the law*, *shall* with proportionable severity *be judged by the*

SECT. iv.

Rom. II. 9.

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

10

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

11

12 For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.

12

Raphel. Not. ex Xen. in loc. As for the difference between Θυμος and Οργη, *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. II. p. 14) takes some pains to shew, that the former signifies the first *conception* of *anger*, the latter a *desire* and *purpose of punishing*. Some reference to this interpretation will be found in the *paraphrase*, though expressed as briefly as possible.

[f] *To the Jew first.*] Here we have the first express mention of Jews in this section; and it is introduced with great energy and weight. Their being trained up in the knowledge of the true religion, and having Christ and his apostles first sent to them, will place them in the foremost rank of the criminals who obey not the truth.

[g] *Acceptance of persons.*] That is, in passing the final sentence, he is determined by their real characters.—This is very consistent with an equality in distributing advantages and opportunities of improvement, according to the sovereign pleasure of the great Lord of all. This assertion of the apostle's, so often repeated, will appear the more important and seasonable, as the Jews thought that no Israelite should be deprived of future happiness, whatever his faults had been; unless he were guilty of apostacy, idolatry, and a few other very enormous crimes. See Mr. *Jortin's Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion*, p. 26, 27, and *the notes there.*

[h] *Sinned without the Mosaic law, &c.*] It is evident that must here be intended; for none can sin without the *natural law*, under which all are born.

SECT. iv.

the law[i], and meet with a more awful sentence, as their offences have been aggravated by such express discoveries of the Divine will: *For not the* men who are merely respectful *hearers of the law* of God in the synagogues, or loud and vehement applauders or defenders of it elsewhere, [*are*] *just before God*, nor will he ever accept any encomiums upon it, instead of the obedience it demands; *but the doers of the law*, who steadily and universally, in the tenor of their lives, act agreeably to its precepts; they, and they only, *shall be justified*, in the day of final audit and account; whether their knowledge of it were more or less express. *For when the Gentiles, who have not the* written revelation of the Divine *law*, *do*, *by* an instinct of *nature*, and in consequence of the untaught dictates of their own mind, *the* moral *duties required by the* precepts of the *law*[k], *these having not the* benefit of an express and revealed *law*, *are* nevertheless *a law unto themselves:* the voice of nature is their rule, and they are inwardly taught, by the constitution of their own minds, to revere it as the law of that God by whom it was formed. And they *who* are in this state, do evidently *shew the work of the law*, in its most important moral precepts, *written upon their hearts*, by the same Divine hand that engraved the decalogue upon the tables given to Moses; *their consciences joining to bear witness* to it, *and* [*their*] *mutual reasoning among themselves*, *accusing* those that break such precepts, *or defending* those who observe them, attest the same thing. As therefore there are sure traces of some natural knowledge of the law, a due regard will be maintained towards them, and on this most equitable principle will the grand process be conducted, *in that* awful *day when God shall judge the secrets of* the hearts of *men by Jesus Christ*, *according to* the tenour of that glorious dispensation which I may call *my gospel*[l], as it is committed to my care;

Rom. II. 13.

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another;)

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

i *Perish—be judged.*] These two phrases are so different, that one would hardly think they were intended to signify the same ideas; yet so many arguments, both from reason and revelation, lie against supposing wicked heathens annihilated, as Mr. Locke seems to insinuate from these words, that I think it most rational to interpret both these expressions as signifying *real punishment*, but in *different degrees*.

k *By nature.*] *Raphelius (Not. ex Xen. in loc.)* shews, that animals are said to do that *by nature* which they do *by instinct;* and *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. II. p. 16,) that τα του νομου signifies the duties inculcated by the law.

l *According to my gospel.*] Nothing is more contrary to the apostle's meaning, as expressly declared above, than that all men

care; in which no doctrine is more important, or evident, than that of a universal and most impartial judgment. SECT. IV.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us revere the *righteous judgment of God*, which is here laid before us in so particular and affecting a manner; remembering we are each of us to have our part in that day of final retribution, and that *the secrets of* our *hearts will* then be *made manifest.* Let us often reflect upon the awful result; and consider, that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish* will be our portion, if we are *contentious and disobedient to the truth*, yea, if we do not, *by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek* the promised *glory, honour and immortality;* which if we do, we shall, through the grace of God, secure *everlasting life.* Vain will our knowledge and our profession otherwise be, and our testimony against the sins of others will only inflame the guilt of our own. Ver. 16 8 9 7 1

Let it ever be remembered, that *the goodness of God*, which we have such daily reason to acknowledge and adore, gently takes us, as it were, by the hand, and *leadeth to repentance;* and while we continually live upon it, let us not act in contempt of it, or abuse it to our own inconceivable detriment. Is the wrath already laid up so small, that we should be increasing the treasure? Increasing the terrors of the *day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?* 4 5

It will be a most impartial, as well as important day. Nor are we concerned to know how the heathen will fare in it: let it suffice us, that if they are condemned, they will be righteously condemned; not for remaining ignorant of the gospel they never had an opportunity of hearing, but for violating those precepts of the Divine law which were *inscribed on their consciences.* Let us bless God that he has written it there, and reverence the traces of his hand on our own minds; always remembering, that the discoveries of revelation were never intended to erase or discredit the dictates of nature, but to illustrate and confirm them. 14, 15

We shall be judged by the dispensation we have enjoyed; and how 12

men are to be judged by the gospel. He only means, that the gospel teaches such a judgment. Therefore, some transposing the last clause, render it, very plainly and properly, *In the day when God shall, according to my gospel, judge the secrets of men.* Mr. Mace transposes the whole sixteenth verse to join it with the twelfth; and I think it very evident, the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth verses come in as a *parenthesis:* but the transposition of verses seems a dangerous thing; though, I think, in some evident cases, that of a few words may be pardoned, considering the different genius of *ancient* and *modern, eastern* and *western* languages.

a *Bearest*

SECT. iv. how devoutly soever we may hear and speak of it, shall be condemned, if we have not acted agreeably thereto. *The Lord grant*
13 *that we may* all *find* that *mercy of the Lord.* which we shall every one of us need *in that day;* and that we may find it, may we keep that day continually in view, and direct all our actions with a regard to its grand decisions.

SECT. V.

Paul proceeds to fix the charge upon the Jews, that they were sinners, as well as the Gentiles; and consequently stood in need of justification by the grace of the gospel, as well as they. Rom. II. 17, *to the end.*

ROMANS. II. 17.

SECT. v. I HAVE hitherto been speaking of the inexcusable guilt of those who have the greatest opportunity of knowing their duty, and in consequence of this acknowledge it, and condemn others for acting contrary to it; while yet they are guilty of the same evils. I will now keep on the reserve no longer; but will boldly declare, that in what I have said concerning such, I meant the conviction, not merely of heathen philosophers, but of wicked Jews; and if thou, O reader, art such an one, I apply myself personally to thee. *Behold, thou bearest the name of a Jew*[a], *and thou reposest thyself on* the knowledge and profession of *the law,* as if that would save thee; *and thou gloriest in* the true *God,* in whom thou believest; as if thy descent and profession, by virtue of the peculiar covenant he made with thy fathers, must necessarily intitle thee to his
18 favour. Thou boastest of it as thine honour *and* happiness, that thou *knowest* [*his*] *will;* not merely by uncertain conjecture and reasoning, but by an express revelation; *and* that thou accurately *discernest* and distinguishest upon *things that differ*[b], which untaught nature may in many respects

Rom. II. 17.

ROMANS II. 17.

BEHOLD, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God;

18 And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent

a *Bearest the name of a Jew.*] The apostle frequently addresses himself to unconverted Jews in this epistle, and especially here; for no doubt there were many of them at Rome, who might be curious to know, what he, who had been so violent an enemy to Christianity, would say to recommend it. And Paul's great love to them engaged him, on the contingency of such an event, to insert such passages; and other passages are calculated for the conviction of other *unbelievers,* as well as for the edification of Christians.

b *Discernest things that differ.*] So Beza renders δοκιμαζεις τα διαφεροντα; and *Elsner* vindicates it in a *manner* which seems very satisfactory; though Capellus, Hammond

cellent, being instructed out of the law,

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness.

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest, A man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest

respects confound; *being* thyself well *instructed out of the law*, having been from thy infancy catechised and educated in the accurate knowledge of it. *And* in consequence of this, thou *art* very *confident, that thou thyself art* fit to teach the whole Gentile world; to be *a guide of the blind*, as thou thinkest them to be; *a light to them, that* for want of the light thou dispersest, *are in darkness: An instructor of the ignorant,* *a teacher of* these *babes*[c], as thou esteemest them in comparison with thyself; *having* perhaps not only the sacred oracles in thine hands, but also, in order to render thee more expert and methodical in the use of them, *a* summary, a compendious system and *form of the knowledge and truth which is* contained *in the law*[d].

Now I deny not that thine advantages are in this respect very great; but I must caution thee, that thou art not deceived by any absolute dependence upon them; and must press thee to reflect how far thine own temper and conduct is agreeable to this knowledge and profession. Let me ask *therefore, Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* Dost thou act as if thou hadst forgotten thine own precepts, or didst imagine they did not oblige thee? *Thou that preachest*, for instance, *a man should not steal, dost thou* think thyself tolerated to *steal*[e]*? Thou that forbiddest a man to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that dost* so *abominate idols*, and speakest of them at all times with such great and just abhorrence, *dost thou commit sacrilege* by robbing the true God of what he so justly claims from thee, whether of outward tribute, or inward homage; while thou so strenuously disputest against any other object of worship? In one word, *thou that gloriest in the*

SECT. V.

Rom. II. 19.

20

21

22

23

mond, and Erasmus, defend our translation, *approvest things which are more excellent.* See *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. II. p. 17.

c *Blind,—ignorant,—babes.*] These were titles which the proud Jews often gave to the Gentiles.

d *Form.*] Μορφωσις has this signification, 2 Tim. iii. 5. And *Bos (Exercit.* p. 100, 101) shews, that it often signifies *the sketch*, or *outlines of a thing*; which suits the interpretation here given better than he seems to apprehend.—L'Enfant renders it, *having in the law the rule of knowledge and truth*; but I know not whether μορφωσις ever signifies *rule*; and if the *article* has any force, it is in favour of the rendering we have preferred.

e *Dost thou steal?*] Grotius on this text proves from Josephus, that some of the Jewish priests lived by *rapine*, depriving others of their due share of the tithes, and even suffering them to perish for want; that others were guilty of *gross uncleanness*; and as for sacrilegiously *robbing God* and *his altar*, it had been complained of as early as Malachi's days, Mal. i. 6, 12, 13. So that the instances are given with great propriety and judgment.

f *For*

SECT. V.

the law, as so excellent, and thinkest it such an honour to be acquainted with it, *dost thou by the transgression of the law dishonour God*, and act as if thou wert studying the declaration of his will, only to shew him, in a more presumptuous and contumacious manner, that thou dost not regard it? It is not an improbable supposition that I have now been making; *for* I, who have had an opportunity of knowing by long experience the temper and character of the Jewish people, know it to be such, that I will boldly say to their faces, "*the name of* the *God* of Israel, for which you profess so warm a zeal, *is by your means blasphemed among the Gentiles*, and his holy religion brought into contempt by your notorious and scandalous immoralities; *as it is written* in your own scriptures concerning your fathers, whose evil deeds you so generally imitate." (Compare 2 Sam. xii. 14; Isai. lii. 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 23.)

Rom. II. 23.

kest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

25 My duty absolutely requires me to give such cautions, and to make such remonstrances as these: *for circumcision is indeed profitable, if a man keep the law*[f]: his being a Jew, if he be truly a good man, will give him many advantages for becoming a Christian; and were his obedience perfect, would intitle him to the blessings promised in the law. *But if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is* in effect *become uncircumcision:* thou wilt have no more benefit by it than if thou hadst never received it; as thou well knowest, that according to the tenour of the law itself, circumcision, far from being any excuse for thy offence, will rather expose thee in many respects to a much greater punishment. *And therefore*, by a parity of reason, *if the uncircumcision*, that is, an uncircumcised person, *observe* and obey *the* greatest and most important precepts or *righteous determinations of the law*, though without any acquaintance with the book that contains them; if he faithfully and steadily conform himself to the main branches of virtue and rectitude it requires

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

26 Therfore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision

f *For circumcision*, &c] It is most evident that γαρ cannot here signify that the following words are a reason for what was asserted in those immediately preceding: it seems little more than expletive, as the particle *now* among us often is. I shall not therefore in many passages, take the pains of endeavouring to find such a connection as would justify the use of it in its strictest propriety; in attempting which, many have vainly perplexed themselves to no other purpose than to make the writings of St. Paul appear more obscure than they really are.

cumcision be counted for circumcision?

quires, *shall not his uncircumcision be imputed* or reckoned *as circumcision?* Shall he not be treated as favourably by God in his final account, as if he had been circumcised, when his not being so does not proceed from any contempt of the Divine authority, but from his knowing nothing of the rite, or not apprehending it in his particular circumstances to be his duty to practise it? SECT. V. Rom. II. 26.

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

Yea, it is certain, that *the uncircumcision that is by nature*, a man who continues uncircumcised as he was born, *accomplishing* the great moral purposes of *the law*, in subserviency to which its rituals were appointed, *shall judge* and condemn *thee; who* while thou actest *by the letter* of its ceremonial precepts, *and* retainest *circumcision* and all its appendages with the greatest exactness, *art* nevertheless, in things far more essential and important, *a transgressor of the law*, to the spiritual meaning and extent of which thou continuest an utter stranger, and which thou encouragest thyself, by these external observances to neglect. 27

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

For upon the whole, as you would not allow any man to be truly a Jew, merely for any outward rites which he might observe, if he continued uncircumcised, how carefully soever he might conceal it; so must I freely declare to you, that *he is not* in the most sublime and important sense *a Jew*, that is, one of God's covenant and beloved people, *who is* merely *so in outward shew, neither* indeed [*is that*] the true *circumcision which is apparent in the flesh.*] 28

29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in

Nothing merely ritual or ceremonial can recommend a man to the Divine favour; *but he* [*is*] *a Jew*, that is, one of God's chosen people, *who is one in the hidden part*, as David expresses it, (Psal. li. 6.) or in the secret recesses of the soul; *and* the acceptable *circumcision, is that of the heart*, which your own prophets so often inculcate, see Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4.) when they urge the putting away all inward impurity and obstinacy, as that which is most highly offensive in the sight of God. This excellent circumcision is seated *in the spirit*, consisting of a change made there by the operation of the Divine Spirit himself, and *not* merely *in* an external conformity to *the letter* of the law, of which the worst of men may be capable. Now such a person, whatever his outward profession may be, is one, *whose praise is* 29

not

SECT. V.

Rom. II. 29.

not so much *of men* [g], who eager to spread their own sects, applaud those who become their proselytes, or most strenuously retain their peculiar forms: *but* is *of God*, who alone knows the heart, and whose esteem and complacency is infinitely preferable to that of whole nations or worlds.

in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 28 LET our hearts be always attentive to these lessons of inward religion which the sacred oracles fail not continually to inculcate.

29 It is the praise of God that is in question: and who can be so lost to all true greatness of mind, to all generous ambition, as that he should not long, and even burn to obtain it? Or who can enjoy, or attend to the praise of men, while he has any reason to fear that God condemns?

17 To have the name of a Jew, or of a christian! How little will it signify: To boast in an *external* and temporary *relation to God*, if we are such as shall finally be disowned by him, will make us the more wretched. 18 *To have known his will, to have distinguished things that differ*, and set up for instructors or reprovers of others, will only furnish out matter of condemnation from our own 19--21 mouths; if, while *teaching others*, we *teach not ourselves*. Well may the punishment be aggravated, where the guilt is so great; when it brings so peculiar a reproach upon religion, and in effect dictates so many blasphemies against the name of God, at the 24 very time it pretends to exalt it.

We pity the Gentiles, and we have reason to do it; for they are lamentably blind and dissolute: but let us take heed, lest those appearances of virtue, which are to be found among some 26--27 of them, *condemn us*; who with the *letter* of the *law*, and the *gospel*, and with the solemn *tokens of a covenant relation to God*, transgress his precepts, and violate our engagements to him; so turning the means of goodness and happiness into the occasion of more aggravated guilt and misery.

g *Praise not of men*, &c. Perhaps here is a reference to the etymology of the word *Jews*; it being derived from the name of *Judah*, which signifies *Praise*. Compare Gen. xxix. 35. and xlix. 8.

a *The*

SECT.

SECT. VI.

After removing some objections, the sad case both of Jews and Gentiles is further illustrated; and the representation shewn to be agreeable to the scriptures of the Old Testament, Rom. III. 1—19.

ROMANS III. 1.

WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision;

ROMANS III. 1.

SECT. VI.

Rom. III. 1.

BUT some may be ready to object, "If it be so, that no circumcision, but that of the heart, will avail to men's final happiness; *what then* [*is*] *the advantage of the Jew, or what the profit of circumcision*, which yet you seemed to allow, when you said but just before, (chap. ii. 25,) that it in some circumstances profiteth?" Nor do I deny it now; I say that it profiteth *much every way*, or in a variety of respects; as I shall hereafter more fully shew, (compare chap. ix. 4, 5,) and *chiefly in that they*, who have received it, *have been intrusted with the oracles of God*[a] in the Divinely inspired scriptures, by which they are taught many important lessons, which may direct their lives, and dispose them to embrace the gospel, to the security of their final and everlasting salvation.

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

2

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect.

Of great importance indeed are these Divine oracles to this purpose. *And what if some*, and they a considerable number, of those who once possessed these invaluable treasures, *believed* them *not*, or did not duly consider what they speculatively believed, and so rejected the gospel to which they were intended to lead: *Shall their unbelief disannul* and enervate *the faith of God*;[b] Shall it destroy his fidelity to his promises, or prevent our receiving them and owning their accomplishment, with becoming regard? *God forbid*, that we should insinuate any thing of this kind. No; *let* the blessed *God* ever be acknowledged to *be true* and faithful, *though every man be*

3

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest

4

a *The oracles of God.*] This is so remarkable and important a testimony to the Divine *inspiration of the Old Testament* in general, that it can leave no doubt concerning the full persuasion of St. Paul upon this head.

b *The faith of God.*] This is an ambiguous expression, and may either signify, *the fidelity of God*, or that *faith of ours* which God has pointed out as the way of obtaining justification and life. The senses run at last into each other. I have included both; and hinted, in the last words of the paraphrase, at a sort of *intermediate sense*; as the attentive reader will observe.

c *When*

SECT. VI.

Rom. III. 4.

be esteemed a *liar*, and unfit to have any confidence reposed in him; *as it is written*, (Psal. li. 4.) "*that thou mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest* upon the whole *overcome, when thou art called into judgment* [c]; that they, who insolently dare to arraign the equity of thy conduct, may soon meet with the confusion they deserve."

mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

5 *But* a Jew may be ready further to object, and say, "*If our unrighteousness recommend the righteousness of God* [d] and illustrate his perfections in that way of becoming righteous by faith, which he now ordains; *what shall we say*, and what are we to expect? *Is* not *God unrighteous, who inflicteth* that *wrath*, which it is well known, you assert, he will execute upon the whole Jewish nation, for rejecting it?" *I* now *speak as a man*, who had a mind to cavil at the gospel, might plead; and by no means express my own sentiments, as you may well imagine.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

6 No; *God forbid*, that I should harbour such a thought, or allow such a consequence. *For how then should God judge the world?* With Abraham our Father, I acknowledge him under the character of the judge of all the earth; and maintain that he will always [e] do right,) Gen. xviii. 25. And as *for* such a caviller, he might as well speak out, and say, *If the truth of God hath abounded to his own glory by means of my lie*; [e] my falsehood and iniquity of any kind; if he has taken occasion to over-rule my offence to the accomplishment of his word, and the honour of his administration; *why am I* nevertheless *called into judgment as a sinner*, and arraigned for that as a crime, which is attended with such happy consequences?" [*And why may I not say,*] *(as we are calumniated, and some* most injuriously *affirm, that we maintain)* "*let us do evil* things, *that*

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded; through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

8 And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm

c *When thou art called into judgment.*] Elsner and Bos have abundantly shewn, that κρινεσθαι has this signification, compare Acts xxv. 25; xxvi. 6. and that νικαν, in such a connection, signifies *to carry the cause*. See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. II. p. 18, 19; and *Bos in loc.*

d *The righteousness of God.*] Though the phrase be in itself ambiguous, I think Dr. Whitby has abundantly proved it has here the sense we give it.

e *If the truth of God*, &c.] The Prussian Testament renders this clause, "In the mean time if my lie conduces to the glory of God, by making the grandeur of his truth shine forth with superior advantage," &c. This is the clear and genuine sense, but it is not consistent with the rule I generally follow to deviate so far from the words of the original; and I mention it as a specimen of many liberties, in which I have declined following that version after attentive examination of it.

f *Whose*

firm that we say. Let us do evil, that good may come: whose damnation is just.

that good consequences *may come* from them?" SECT. vi.
You may easily see, that principles like these would justify the greatest crimes in the world, if they might be so over-ruled as to prove the occasion of good; and consequently, would so entirely confound the nature of good and evil, that I think it not worth while to argue with such persons; *whose condemnation is* indeed so apparently *just*[f], that I leave them to be convinced, and silenced, by their own consciences; and only mention such a detestable principle, solemnly to warn you against it. Rom. III. 8.

9 What then? are we better *than they?* no, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

But, to return from this long digression—If the question I mentioned before be repeated, and any say, "*What then*, upon the whole, *have we* Jews *the advantage* of the Gentiles so far, that in consequence of having these oracles of God which we have received, the promises which he will never fail to observe, and the principles of righteousness, which he will never himself violate in his conduct, we can claim justification before God by virtue of our obedience to his law?" *Not at all; for we have before proved that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin*, and have placed them as convicted criminals at the Divine bar; *As it is written*[g], (Psal. xiv. 1,) in a variety of passages which may be applied to the present occasion, "*There is none righteous, no not one; There is none that understandeth* his duty and his true interest; *there is none that seeketh after God*[h], and constantly endeavoureth to secure his

9

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:

10

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God:

11

f *Whose condemnation is just.*] I think this must imply, that there are certain rules which God has laid down for us, disobedience to which in any imaginable circumstance is universally a moral evil; even though the quantity of good arising from thence to our fellow-creatures, should be greater than that arising from observing those rules. For if this be not allowed, there can be no shadow of force in the apostle's conclusion.

g *As it is written.*] These scriptures are collected from different parts of the *Old Testament*; but there are many editions of the *Seventy* in which they all stand together, in the xivth, or according to their order, xiiith Psalm; which has given some occasion to think, that other alterations may have been made in that *Greek version*, to render it more agreeable to the *New Testament*; though many passages might escape the notice of such as made this attempt, if it were really made. But it must have been, as we see in this instance it was, a fruitless one; considering how wide such copies were dispersed, and how different the religious sentiments of the persons with whom they were lodged. It seems much more reasonable, to account for the diversity we find between *the original* and *quotations*, by supposing the sense, rather than words, intentionally regarded; and some accidental alterations have happened since in the *Hebrew* copies, which in several places may make the difference greater than it *originally* was.

h *There is none that seeketh after God,* &c.] It is allowed, that this passage only proves directly, what was the character of the Jews in David's time; but it plainly shews that the wrath of God was awakened

SECT. VI.

his favour. *They are all declined* from that moral rectitude, which is the glory of the rational nature; *they are altogether become use-*
Rom. III. 12. *less* as to the great end for which they were made, so that *there is none that practiseth good*, there is *not so much as one.* (Psal. xiv. 1—3.
13 liii. 1—3.) *Their throat* [*is*] noisome and dangerous as *an open sepulchre*, gaping to swallow them up, or poison them with its infected air; *with their tongues they have used* the most mischievous *deceit*; and while they make the fairest profession of friendship, *the* mortal *venom of asps* [*is*] hid *under their lips*, which utter the most infectious and fatal
14 slanders. (Psal cxl. 3.) They are men *whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness*; (Psal. x. 7.) so that the most shocking profaneness mingles itself with that malignity of heart towards their fellow men, which breathes in
15 every word. *Their feet* [*are*] *swift* to run towards the places where they have appointed *to shed the blood* of the innocent. (Prov. i. 16,
16 18.) *Ruin and misery* [*are*] on the whole *in* all *their ways*; they bring it upon others, and so, by an inevitable consequence, upon
17 themselves at last. *And* as for *the way of peace* and happiness, *they have not known* or regard-
18 ed it. (Isa. lix. 7, 8.) And to sum up all in one word, the great cause of all this degeneracy is, that *the fear of God is not before their eyes*, but they are utterly destitute of any true principle of religion, of any reverence and love to the great and adorable Object of it." (Psal. xxxvi. 1.)

19 This, my brethren, is in general the sad character of mankind in their fallen state; and the representation is the more striking, as it is borrowed from the sacred writings. *Now we know, that what the law saith* in such passages as these, *it saith to those* that were *under the law*[i]; they do

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one:

13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways;

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every

awakened against them, as well as others, for their sins: it proves also, that a general degeneracy might prevail among them, though by profession God's people; and it suggests a strong presumption, that if Israel in David's time, which was one of its best ages, was so bad, Gentile nations were still worse; and in all these views, it was much to the apostle's purpose to produce the passage. The like observation is in a great measure applicable to all the following quotations: as the *paraphrase* on ver. 19, suggests, or rather, as the apostle himself there evidently insinuates.

i *What the law saith.*] It appears here, that this word *law* doth sometimes signify the *Old Testament in general*; for not one of the quotations above is taken from the pentateuch.

k *Stand*

every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

do not immediately relate to the heathen, but contain the character of those that were at that time the professing people of God. And as most of these passages are borrowed from the writings of David, Solomon, or Isaiah, it appears, that even in the best days of their state, they had a great deal of enormous wickedness among them. And if Israel, even at such a time, could not justify itself, much less can it be imagined that the idolatrous nations of the Gentiles should be able to do it: *so that every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world stand convicted before God*[k] as guilty, and acknowledge itself obnoxious to a dreadful sentence from his tribunal. Now I earnestly desire to bring every reader under a sense of this, as what is of the highest importance, in order to receiving the gospel with becoming gratitude and joy.

SECT. VI.

Rom. III. 19.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can read this melancholy picture of human nature, copied by the hand of an apostle from the lines first drawn by inspired prophets, without deep humility, and lamentation? To this was it sunk, that there was *none righteous, no not one;* none disposed *to seek after God,* or to cultivate *his fear.* And from this bitter root, the apostasy of our nature from God, what detestable fruit proceeds! *The throat which is like an open sepulchre,* the *deceitful tongue,* the *envenomed lips,* the malicious heart, the murderous hand! And who can wonder, that such rebels to their heavenly Father should sometimes prove ruffians to their brethren!

Ver. 10, 11 18

13, 14

Let us bless God that we have been preserved from falling *into such enormities,* and from falling *by them.* His grace has restrained us from sinning against him in such an aggravated manner; his Providence has guarded us from those *whose feet are swift to shed blood,* and *in whose paths there is destruction and misery.*

Let us remember the view in which these instances were brought; even to evince this deplorable, but undeniable truth, *that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin.* The purpose of conviction therefore being answered on our hearts, let us humble ourselves

15, 16 19

[k] *Stand convicted before God.*] So ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ seems exactly to signify. Archbishop *Tillotson* would render it, *liable to Divine justice;* which is the same in sense. See *his Works,* Vol. I. p. 126.

a *Be*

SECT. VI.

selves before God, as those that *stand guilty in his presence*, and *obnoxious to his judgment.*

Ver. 2 Thankfully let us own the inestimable goodness of God in having favoured us with his sacred *oracles*, and endeavour to improve in the knowledge of them. Thus instructed, let us be careful to form the most honourable notion of God, as the worthy and 6 universal *Judge*, who will never fail to *do right;* and may these views of him produce an abhorrence of every thing evil which must necessarily be displeasing to him. Nor let us ever allow ourselves to be brought under the influence of those fallacious and pernicious maxims which would persuade us, that the *goodness of the intention sanctifies the badness of the action;* or that the pre- 8 tended benevolence of the end will justify irregularities in the means. *God's judgment* and decision is final; and an inspired apostle's authority is an answer to a thousand subtilties, which might attempt to turn us from the strictest rules of that immutable rectitude on which it always proceeds.

SECT. VII.

From the representation made above, of the guilt and misery of mankind, the apostle deduces the necessity of seeking justification by the gospel, and consequently the excellency of that dispensation, as exhibiting the method of it. Rom. III. 20, *to the end.*

ROMANS III. 20.

SECT. VII.

I HAVE just been proposing to you convincing evidence of the universal degeneracy and corruption of mankind, and shewing you, that the whole world must stand convicted before God: *therefore* let all my readers be persuaded to admit it, as a most certain principle, and at all times to act upon it, that according to the just and humble acknowledgement of the Psalmist, (Psal. cxliii. 2,) *no flesh shall be justified*, or pronounced righteous, *before him*[a], *by works of* complete

Rom. III. 20.

ROMANS III. 20.

THEREFORE by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for

[a] *Be justified*, &c.] The learned Vitringa hath with great propriety observed, that this word is borrowed from Psal. cxliii. 2, and must therefore signify *to receive the testimony of being righteous from a judge*, and cannot merely signify *to obtain mercy*. *To be justified*, also sometimes signifies to *overcome in judgment*, Psal. li. 4, and the expression of being *just before God* implies the same. And that this is the *sense* of the word in *this epistle*, appears from several passages; particularly Rom. ii. 3. So that on the whole, as he argues, *justification* is not a phrase parallel to *forgiveness*, but refers to a *judicial process*, and carries in it the idea of *acquittal, praise*, and *reward*. And indeed it seems to me always ultimately to refer to the being pronounced, and treated as righteous, in the great day of God's universal judgment. See Rom. ii. 13, 16.

[b] *By*

for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

complete obedience to *the law* of God[b] whether natural or revealed. *For*, instead of justifying any man, it only anticipates, in a more obvious and affecting manner, the sense of his condemnation; as *by the law is the knowledge of sin*[c], it discovers to us how grievous a thing it is, and exhibits the righteous displeasure of God against it. Rom. III. 20.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:

But yet, blessed be God, every door of hope is not shut against the sinner, convicted by the law: *for the righteousness of God*, that is, the manner of becoming righteous, which God hath ordained and appointed in his gospel, *without* that perfect obedience which *the law* requires, *is now made manifest; being* indeed *attested by* the whole tenor of *the law and the prophets*[d]; which join in leading our eyes to the great Messiah: 21

22 Even the righteousness of God, *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;

Even the righteousness of God, which he hath appointed us to seek, *by the* exercise of a living *faith* on the power and grace *of* his Son *Jesus Christ*; to whom he commands us to commit our souls, with all humble and obedient regard. This way of obtaining righteousness and life is now, I say, made manifest *to all, and* like a pure, complete, and glorious robe, 22

b *By works of the law.*] I think with Mr. Locke, that the word *law* must here be taken in this extent, comprehending *ceremonial* and *moral*, *revealed* and *natural*. And this I conclude, not so much from the omission of the *article*, (compare Rom. ii. 12, 14, 25, 27. chap. iii. 31; chap. v. 13, 20; in all which places, and many more, νομος without the *article* signifies the *Mosaic law*, as the sense evidently proves,) but from the conclusion which the apostle draws, and the whole tenor of his subsequent argument; which would have very little weight, if there were room to object, though we cannot be justified by our obedience to the *law of Moses*, we may be justified by our obedience to God's *natural law*. And nothing can be more evident, than that the premises, from which this conclusion is drawn, refer to the Gentiles as well as the Jews; and consequently, that *law* has here and in many subsequent passages, that general sense.—A very learned person has lately proposed to render εξ εργων νομου *by the law of works*; pleading βαπτισμων διδαχης, (Heb. vi. 2.) as a parallel instance; but I have declined this rendering, as (ver. 27.) the apostle expresses the *law of works* by words placed in a different order, νομου των εργων, opposed to νομου πιστεως and (ver. 28.) χωρις εργων νομου is plainly, as we render it, *without the works of the law*; as the continuation of the apostle's argument, in reference to Abraham shews. Nor can I see what great end could be served by allowing this criticism; since the apostle elsewhere asserts *justification* χωρις εργων *without works* (chap. iv. 6.) And to say that εργων is put *elliptically* for νομου εργων (that is, *works* for the *law of works*) is very arbitrary. Nor can I conceive, that any one can be justified by the *law of works*, without being justified *by the works*, or *vice versa*; and this is expressly Paul's assertion, chap. iv. 4, 5.

c *By the law is the knowledge of sin.*] This strongly implies the broken and disjointed state of human nature, in consequence of which the precepts which God gives us, will, on the whole, only serve to convict us of guilt, but not to produce an obedience by which we can finally be acquitted and accepted. Some render it, the *law takes cognizance of sin.*

d *Attested by the law and the prophets.*] See in this view, Gen. xv. 6. Isa. liii. *ult.* Dan. ix. 24.

e Come

SECT. VII.

robe, is put *upon all them that believe;* whether they were, or were not, acquainted with, or subject to, the Mosaic law before their conversion to Christianity: *for there is* in this respect *no difference* at all between one believer and another. *For all have sinned,* as we demonstrated above, *and come short of the glory of God*[e], they have failed of rendering him that glory that was so justly his due, and thereby have not only made themselves unworthy the participation of glory and happiness with him, but stand exposed to his severe and dreadful displeasure:

Rom. III. 23.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:

24 *And* if any escape it, they are such, as being induced to embrace the gospel, *are justified freely* without pretending to plead any merit of their own, *by his* rich and sovereign *grace,* proposed there *by virtue of that redemption* and *deliverance which is in Christ Jesus* his well-beloved

24 Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:

25 Son: *Whom God hath* in his infinite mercy *proposed* and exhibited to us in the gospel[f], *as a propitiation* through whom he may honourably discover himself as propitious to us, and converse favourably with us, as he did with Moses from the mercy-seat: an inestimable privilege, which we receive *by* virtue of *faith in his* atoning *blood,* with which the throne of God is, as it were, sprinkled over; as the propitiatory in the tabernacle was with the blood of the sin-offering. (Lev. xvi. 15, 16.) And this is appointed *for a demonstration of his righteousness in the remission of sins,* which now appears to be accomplished without any reflection upon that awful attribute which might seem to have a claim so directly contrary to it; and this remission extends not only to the present, but former age, and to all the offences *which are* long since *past, according to the forbearance of God,* who has forborn to execute judgment upon sinners for their repeated provocations, in reference to

25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God:

e *Come short of the glory of God.*] Mr. Fleming, and after him, if I mistake not, Lord Barrington, explains this *falling short of God's glory,* as signifying *the loss of that lucid resemblance of the glorious Shechinah,* which they, after Mr. Joseph Mede, suppose our first parents to have worn in their primæval state. But if it were to be granted they had such a glory in that state, I cannot think it would have been natural to have called it *God's glory,* or to explain the word ὑστεροῦνται of *losing it,* which certainly signifies a deficiency of what might have been attained, rather than the loss of what is actually possessed. Compare Mat. xix. 20; 1 Cor. i. 7; Heb. iv 1.xii. 15.

f *Proposed.*] Some contend that προεθέτο here signifies *to exhibit*; others, that it signifies *to determine, intend,* or *fix upon.* (Compare *Bos in loc.* and Eph. 9. 11; Rom. i. 13.) I have chose the word *propose,* as having just the same ambiguity.

g *Just,*

SECT. vii.

to that atonement which he knew should in due time be made. He has, I say, proposed his Son *for a demonstration of his righteousness,* which now, *in this present* ever-memorable and signal *time,* is so wonderfully illustrated in the great transactions of our own age, intended for this purpose, *that he might be,* and appear *just, and* yet at the same time, without impeaching in any degree the rights of his government, *the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus,* whosoever he be[g], that is, of every one who sincerely believes in him, and acquiesces in that great method of salvation which God hath published by him, and established in his perfect obedience and meritorious sufferings.

Rom. III. 26.

26 To declare I *say,* at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Contemplate, I beseech you, this only way of redemption and acceptance, and say, *Where then [is] boasting* in our own righteousness, or on account of any other peculiar privileges? Or what reason can any who partake of these blessings, have to glory in themselves? You will easily see, that *it is* entirely *excluded.* And reflect farther, *by what law* is it excluded? [*By the law*] *of works?* By that of Moses, or any other law, promising life only to perfect obedience, and threatening all disobedience with inevitable death? By *no* means. This would leave a man all the little reason for boasting he could possibly have; even that he had acted perfectly right and well, and had all that excellence and worth of character which a being in his circumstances could attain. *But* if you suppose him to have recourse to the gospel, *by the law of faith* it must certainly be excluded, since the very constitution of that, requires persons to acknowledge themselves sinners, and as guilty and indigent, to make an humble application to the free mercy of God in Christ for pardon, and every other blessing which is necessary to their final happiness.

27 Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

27

We therefore are come to a conclusion of this part of our argument, *that a man,* of whatever nation,

28 Therefore we conclude,

28

[g] *Just, and the justifier,* &c.] By *just,* Mr. Taylor would understand *merciful,* and Mr. Locke, *faithful to his promises;* but either of these makes but a very cold sense, when compared with that we have here given. It is no way wonderful that God should be *merciful,* or *faithful to his promises,* though the *justifier of believing sinners;* but that he should be *just* in such an act might have seemed incredible, had we not received such an account of the *propitiation* and *atonement.* But our explication is vindicated in a most masterly and unanswerable manner by the worthy author of an *excellent tract,* intitled, *Christ the Mediator,* p. 85, &c. to which I with great pleasure refer the reader.

h A

SECT. VII.

nation, profession, or character, *is justified by* a true, lively, and effectual *faith* in the gospel, *without the works of the law*, [h]; that is, though destitute of any legal works, in consequence of which he could claim justification and life.

Rom. III. 28.

conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

29 And this naturally leaves room to add, [*Is God*] who hath established such a method of justification, *the God of the Jews only, and not also of the Gentiles? Surely* he is the God *of the Gentiles too:* since it is very evident, that all claim from works being thus universally given up, the Jews and Gentiles must in this respect

29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 stand upon a level. *So that* [*it is*] *one God*, the same eternal and unchangeable Jehovah, *that will justify the* Jews, who have received *circumcision*, not by that, but *by faith; and* will justify the Gentiles too, who are still in their *uncircumcision, through* the same *faith*; and therefore demands the grateful love, and the new obedience of both [i].

30 Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Now while we maintain this method of justification and salvation, can it be said, that we derogate from the honour of God's justice or his law! *Do we set aside the law by faith*, as if it were a faulty, or annihilate it, as if it were an useless thing? *God forbid*, that we should ever insinuate such a design, or entertain such a thought. *Nay*, on the contrary, *we* really *establish the law* [k], on a firmer foundation than ever and place it in a juster and more beautiful point of light: for we shew also its honour displayed in the atonement as well as the obedience of Christ; and we make it of everlasting use, for attesting the truth, and illustrating the necessity of the gospel, as well as for directing the lives of men, when they profess to have received it; as we shall abundantly shew in the process of this discourse.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

IMPROVE-

h A lively and effectual *faith, without works*, &c.] By thus guarding the assertion we sufficiently see how very consistent it is with that of St. James, (chap. ii. 17, 23, 25,) who only in effect asserts, that no faith can suffice to our *justification* which is not in fact productive of obedience; and when the matter is thus stated, there is no appearance of contradiction.

i *One God, who justifieth the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*] Mr. Locke would render it, *seeing God is one*, and supposes it an allusion to the prediction, Zech. xiv. 9 *that the Lord shall be one, and his name one*; fulfilled by the publication of the gospel. But I think this supposed allusion far fetched, and see not any occasion for supposing εκ πιστεως, *by faith*, and δια πιστεως *through faith*, to signify different things; nor can I see what different idea can here be affixed to them. L'Enfant renders it, *he will justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision by the same faith.*

k *We establish the law.*] Some render it, *Nay, but we are the persons that observe the law*; which is a just and strong thought, (compare Rom. viii. 3, 4.) but I think not the proper signification of ιστημι.—For the justice of this inference see *Christ the Med.* p. 90—96.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our whole souls rejoice in the glorious display of the Divine mercy, in so beautiful an harmony with Divine justice, in our redemption by *Christ:* to which the apostle in *this section* bears so noble a testimony. We *are all become guilty before God:* so *that if he should mark iniquity, no flesh living could be justified before him:* let us therefore with all reverence and esteem, and with all joy, embrace *the righteousness of God,* as now *attested by the law and prophets,* by Christ and his apostles; which shall *be upon all believers without any difference:* humbling ourselves deeply in the presence of God, *as those who have sinned,* and *come short of his glory;* and seeking to be *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* SECT. VII. Ver. 20 21 22 23 24

To him let us continually look, as the *great propitiation;* exercising *faith in his blood,* and rejoicing that those which seemed to our feeble apprehensions the most jarring attributes, are now reconciled and glorified. Let us readily acknowledge that *boasting is excluded;* and in the grateful overflowings of our souls fall down before that throne whence pardons are dispensed, and confess, "that this act of grace is our only plea;" and that we must remain humble before God for ever, in a sense of the demerit of our sins, and the abundance of his mercy. 25 27

Let *Jews* and *Gentiles* unite in thanksgivings to God, and in love to each other, as having been all involved in the same condemnation, and all partakers of the same compassion. And let Christians remember, that God intended by this illustrious display of grace, not *to supersede,* but to *establish his law.* May we therefore make it our concern, that not only the actions of our lives, but the sentiments of our hearts, be directed and determined by it; as it is now inforced by more powerful motives than when it appeared in its unallayed terrors. 29, 30 31

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle here shews, that Abraham and David sought justification in such a way as the gospel recommends; that is, by faith. Rom. IV. 1—12.

ROMANS IV. 1.

WHAT shall we say then that Abraham,

ROMANS IV. 1.

I HAVE been observing to you, that we Christians, by maintaining the doctrine of justification by faith, instead of superseding and enervating, do indeed establish the Divine law, and assert SECT. VIII. Rom. IV. 1.

SECT. viii.

assert in the most convincing manner both its authority and purity. For the illustration of this therefore, let us consider the important instance of Abraham, and the manner in which he was justified. *What then shall we say, that* the holy patriarch *Abraham, our* reverend *father, according to the flesh, hath found* effectual in this respect[a]? and to what must his justification and acceptance with God be ascribed? *For if Abraham were justified by* circumcision, or by the merit of any other *works*, rather than by the free grace and mercy of God, then *he hath something in which he may glory*[b]: *but* it is certain, by what the sacred oracles express, that, though the behaviour of this celebrated person was indeed innocent, fair and honourable before men, *yet* [*he hath*] *not* any thing to boast *in the sight of God. For what saith the scripture* upon this head? (Gen. xv. 6.) *Abraham believed God*, "when he made him the promise of that miraculous and important Seed, *and* so *it was imputed to him*, or placed to his account, for *righteousness*, or in order to his justification." that is, God was pleased graciously to accept it, though he had not that complete and perfect righteousness which might in strict justice be demanded of every rational creature, as the only condition of his being acquitted at the Divine bar. *Now to him who* thus *worketh* to the utmost extent of all that was required, *the reward* proportioned to that work *is not charged to account, as* matter *of grace*[c], *but of debt*; and he may glory, at least in having diligently earned it. (Compare chap. xi. 6.) *But to him*

Rom. V. 11.

ham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory, but not before God.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that work-

a *Hath found.*] Some would transpose the words, and render them, "*Shall we say that our father Abraham hath found*, that is, obtained justification and life, *according to the flesh*, that is, by circumcision, and observing the carnal rites of the *Mosaic œconomy?*" But when the natural order, and usual import of the phrase makes so easy and so good a sense, I can see no reason for admitting this construction. *Raphelius* shews, that Herodotus, and other *authentic Greek authors*, use ευρισκω for *obtaining*, and that *by merit*. *Annot. ex Herod. in Loc.*

b *He hath something in which he may glory.*] This seems to intimate, that the Jews maintained not only the *necessity*, but the *merit* of the Jewish observances; else it might have been replied, that Abraham was indeed justified upon his being circumcised, but that it was by the grace of God, in freely annexing the promise of justification and life to such a rite.

c *As of grace.*] Raphelius has shewn, that μισθον doth not only signify *a reward of debt*, but also *a gift of favour*; and that the phrase μισθον δωρεαν occurs in Herodotus; so that *a reward of grace* or favour is a *classical* as well as *theological* expression. —Could we be sure that Abraham was once an idolator, it would be some illustration of the apostle's reasoning here; but the validity of it by no means depends upon that fact.

d *Whose*

worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

him who in this sense *worketh not*, who can by no means pretend to have wrought all righteousness, *but* humbly *believeth on him who* declareth the freeness of pardoning grace, and by that *justifieth* even *the ungodly*, if he repent and return, the phrase used concerning Abraham may be applied with the strictest propriety, and it may be said, that *his faith is imputed to him*, or placed to his account *for righteousness*, or to the purpose of his being accepted and treated by God as righteous. SECT. viii. Rom. IV. 5.

6 Even as David also describe h the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;

And [*this is*] very agreeable to what we read elsewhere; particularly *as David* (Psal. xxxii. 1, 2,) *described the blessedness of the man* who is accepted of God, whom he speaks of "as one *to whom God*, according to the method of proceeding we now maintain, *imputeth righteousness without* any supposition of, or regard to a former series of good *works*, supposed to have been performed by him." For he expresses himself thus, "*Blessed are they whose iniquities are pardoned, and whose sins are*, as it were, *covered*[d] by the veil of Divine mercy: *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin.*" Which plainly implies, that sin had been committed by the best and happiest of men, and that it is matter of mercy and favour, that it is not charged to account, so that he should finally be condemned for it. 6

7 *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered:

8 Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

7 8

9 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

Now while we are speaking of *this blessedness* of the pardoned and accepted sinner, give me leave to ask [*doth it come*] *upon the circumcision* [*only*,] *or also on the uncircumcision?* The celebrated instance we have just been mentioning will shew how far circumcision is from being necessary to a share in it. For [*when*] *we say*, as above, *that faith was imputed to Abraham* 9

10 How was it then reck-

for righteousness[e]; *How* and when *was it thus* 10

d *Whose iniquity is pardoned, and whose sin is covered.*] Archbishop *Leighton* has so elegantly and beautifully illustrated these words, that I must beg leave to refer those of my readers that cannot use his Latin meditations on the xxxiid Psalm, to review the English translation of it in the 2d *volume of his Expository Discourses*; printed at Edinburgh, 1748.

e *Imputed to him for righteousness.*] I think nothing can be easier, than to understand how this may be said in full consistence with our being justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that is, our being treated by God as righteous, for the sake of what he has done and suffered: for though this be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be *imputed to us* εις δικαιοσυνην, *in order to our being justified*, or becoming righteous: that is, according to the view in which I have elsewhere more largely stated it, as we are charged as debtors in the book of God's account, what Christ has done, in fulfilling all righteousness for us, is charged as the grand balance of the account;

SECT. viii.

thus imputed, and charged to his account, in this view? *When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?* [*Truly*] the history plainly shews us, that it was *not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision*; for it relates this important circumstance of Abraham, as taking place many years before circumcision was instituted[f].

Rom. IV. 10.

reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 *And* it assures us, that *he received the sign of circumcision*, not as the means of making him acceptable to God when he was not before so, but as the token of his being already accepted; and therefore as *the seal of the righteousness of* that *faith which he had in uncircumcision*[g]: *that so he might be the father of all those who believe in uncircumcision, that righteousness may also be imputed unto them*, that they may be justified in the same means, and that it may be written down in the book of God's remembrance,

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised: that righteousness might be imputed unto them also;

12 that they are so. *And* he received this rite by Divine appointment, that he might also be *the father of the circumcision*, that is, *to those who* should afterwards practise it, and *were not only* partakers of the external ceremony *of circumcision*, which in itself indeed can have no efficacy; *but* shall also *walk in the footsteps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had in uncircumcision*, and which rendered him so dear to God while he was in that state.

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our Father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 7, 8 IF there be indeed such a thing as *happiness* to be enjoyed by mortal man, it is the portion of that man of whom *David* speaks, even of him *whose iniquity is pardoned, and whose sin is covered*, and who enjoys the manifestation of that pardon. Well may he endure the greatest afflictions of life with cherfulness, and look

account; but that it may appear, that we are, according to the tenor of the gospel, intitled to the benefit of this, it is also entered in the book of God's remembrance, "that we are believers:" and, this appearing, we are graciously discharged, yea, and rewarded, as if we ourselves had been perfectly innocent and obedient. See *my Sermons on Salvation by Grace*, p. 14—19, which account is perfectly agreeable to what *Witsius* has remarked. *Oecon. Fœd. lib.* iii. chap. viii. § 36.

f Many years before circumcision was instituted.] It is said this imputation was made on Abraham's believing the promise, Gen. xv. 6, about a year before the birth of Ishmael; but he did not receive circumcision till Ishmael was thirteen years old, Gen. xvii. 27, consequently, Abraham was declared justified at least fourteen years before he was circumcised.

g *Seal of the righteousness of faith.*] This seems an uncontestable proof, that circumcision was a *seal of the covenant of grace*, and not merely of *temporal promises*; and consequently obviates the most considerable objection that hath ever been urged against *infant-baptism*.

a *Mein*

look forward to death with comfort; when the sting of all these evils is taken out, and the returning tokens of the Divine favour convert them into blessings. O let us earnestly pray that this happiness may be ours: that the great and glorious Being whom by our sins we have offended, and in whom alone the right and power of pardon resides, would spread the veil of his mercy over our provocations, and blot them out of the book of his remembrance! SECT. VIII. Ver.

Let us on the one hand fix it in our mind, that it is the character of that man to whom this blessedness belongs, that *in his spirit there is no guile;* and on the other, let us often reflect, that it is in consequence of a *righteousness* which *God imputes*, and which *faith receives* and embraces. We are saved by a scheme that allows us not to mention any works of our own, as if we *had whereof to glory before God*, but teaches us to ascribe our salvation to believing on him *who justifieth the ungodly*. Nor need we be ashamed of flying to such a method to which *Abraham* the father of the faithful had recourse himself, and on which he built his eternal hope. May we share his disposition of mind, that we may inherit the same promises: *walking in the footsteps of our father Abraham.* So shall we also be *called the friends* and children *of God*, and *sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in his heavenly kingdom.* 1, 2 5 1, 2 12

SECT. IX.

In order to recommend the scheme of justification, by believing God's promises, the Apostle shews, that it was an illustrious act of faith, which entailed everlasting honours on the great patriarch Abraham in which he was intended for an example to us. Rom. IV. 13, *to the end.*

ROMANS IV. 13.

FOR the promise that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law,

ROMANS IV. 13.

I HAVE spoken of Abraham as the father of uncircumcised believers, as well as those of the circumcision, (ver. 11, 12,) and that with evident propriety; *for the promise to Abraham and his seed, that he should be heir of the world*[a], that is, that he should inherit all the nations of the SECT. IX. Rom. IV. 13.

[a] *Heir of the world.*] Κοσμος cannot here signify, as ץרא sometimes does, one *country*, or *land*, how fine or large soever. It must therefore imply his inheriting a seed out of all nations, whom he might be said to possess, in such a sense, as children are said to be an *heritage*, Psal cxxvii. 3. Compare Gen. iv. 1; Prov. xvii. 6. See also Psal. lxxxii. 8, where God is said to *inherit* the nations that are taken into his family on the profession of the true religion.

b Cannot

SECT. IX.

the earth, as a seed that should be blessed in him, *was not*, and could not be *by the law* of circumcision, or of Moses; being, as we have already observed, prior to both; *but* it was *by the righteousness of faith*. God gave him that promise on his exerting a remarkable act of faith, on which God in the most gracious and honourable manner declared his acceptance of him as righteous. *Now if they who are of the law*, and depend upon that alone, [*are*] *heirs*, exclusive of all others, (as some so eagerly contend,) then that *faith*, which in the instance before us was so eminently honoured of God, *is made useless*, and treated as a thing of no value; *and* so *the promise* made to it is in effect *abrogated*, the performance of it being put, not only on new conditions, but on such as cannot be perfectly performed in this sinful state[b]. *For the law* of God, considered in itself alone, and without any regard to that grace, which, though it was in fact mingled with it, yet makes no part of the legal dispensation as such; is so extensive and difficult, and we are so weak and sinful, that in fact, instead of securing to us the promised blessings, it only *worketh wrath*, that is, it becomes to us accidentally an occasion of wrath, and exposes us to punishment as transgressors; *for where there is no law*, either revealed or intimated, [*there is*] *no transgression*; but the multiplication of precepts increases the danger of offending, and the clearer declaration of those precepts aggravates the guilt attending the violation. But *therefore* [*it*,] that is, the promise, and the inheritance to which it relates, [*is*] *of faith*, or annexed to it, *that it* [*might be*] *of grace*, that God might magnify the riches of his grace in proposing justification and life to us in a way that might in multitudes of instances be effectual; *that* so the blessing exhibited in *the promise might be* firm, and *secure to all the* believing *seed*; *not only to that* part of his descendants *which was* placed under the dispensation *of the* Jewish *law*, who are not indeed excluded from it, if they seek

Rom. IV. 13.

14 15 16

law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that it *might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith

[b] Cannot be perfectly performed.] This is here said with reference to a *moral impossibility*. It seems evident from what follows, that the law is to be considered as insisting on an obedience absolutely perfect; so that these good men who were justified *under it*, were not justified *by it*, but by the dispensation of grace under which Abraham was, which, though not a part of the covenant of God by Moses, was not, and could not be, abrogated by it. Compare Gal iii. 17.

c *Like*

faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all;

seek it in a proper manner: *but to that which is* the seed of that holy patriarch, to whom the promise was made, by a nobler relation, even by a participation *of the faith of Abraham, who is* in this view *the father of us all:* SECT. ix. Rom. IV. 16.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were:

As it is written, (Gen. xvii. 6,) *I have made thee a father,* not of one family alone to descend from Isaac, or Jacob, but *of many nations;* so that he is in some degree even *like God* himself[c], who is the Father of all good men; like that Almighty Being *in whom he believed, as re-animating those who are dead, and calling* into action and enjoyment *things that are not* now in existence, with the same ease *as those that are*[d]. 17

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

And since I have begun to touch upon it, permit me, my brethren, to animate your faith, by dilating a little farther upon that of this illustrious patriarch. It was he, *who against* all human and probable *hope, believed with* an assured and joyful *hope,* on the security of the Divine word, *that,* unlikely as it seemed, *he should be a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken* to him. (Gen. xv. 5,) when he was called to take a view of the stars of heaven, and God said, "*So* numerous and glorious *shall thy seed be.*" 18

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.

And having received such a promise, *not being feeble in faith,* how feeble soever he might be in his animal constitution, *he considered not his own body,* which with regard to the probability of begetting children was *now dead, being about an hundred years old: nor the deadness of Sarah's womb,* of whom the sacred historian tells us, "that it ceased to be with her after the manner of women:" (Gen. xviii. 11.) 19

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

Amidst all these difficulties and discouragements, *he objected not to the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened by* the exercise of the most vigorous and triumphant *faith,* thereby *giving* a due and becoming *glory to* the great God, the Lord of universal nature; 20

21 And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

And was confidently *persuaded, that what he had* thus graciously *promised, he was,* and ever is, *able to perform,* though that performance should to sensible view seem ever so improbable. 21

And

c *Like God.*] So I think καλοντος may here signify; and accordingly it is rendered, *ad instar Dei* by Parœus.

d *Calling things that are not.*] That this is to be understood of *summoning them,* as it were, *to rise into being,* and *appear before him,* Elsner has well proved on this place.

e Fully

SECT. IX.

Rom. IV. 22. 23 24 25

And therefore this heroic faith was so acceptable to the Divine Being, that *it was*, as we have heard again and again, *imputed* or accounted *to him for righteousness*, that is, in order to his justification. *Neither was it written* in the sacred records, which are to reach the remotest ages, *with regard to him only*, or chiefly to do a personal honour to that illustrious patriarch, *that it was* thus *imputed to him; But* also *for our sakes, to whom it*, that is, the like faith, *shall also be imputed, if we* steadily *believe in him who* not only brought Isaac as from the dead womb of Sarah, but, in the most literal sense, *raised Jesus our Lord from the dead*, when he lay among them slain and mangled by his cruel enemies; Even that great and glorious Redeemer, *who was delivered* up to them by the determinate counsel of God, that by his death and sufferings he might atone *for our* many *offences, and* when he had fully satisfied the Divine justice for them[e], was *raised again for our justification:* that putting our trust in him, who was thus apparently discharged from all farther claim upon him, as our surety we might obtain, by virtue of our relation to him, plenary pardon and eternal life.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us continually bear in our mind the great and venerable example of our father *Abraham:* labour to the utmost to trace his steps; and *have faith in God*, who at his pleasure *quickeneth the dead, and calleth things which are not as if they were.* If sense were to judge, it would pronounce many of these difficulties invincible, which lie in the way of the accomplishment of his promises; but they shall all be fulfilled in their season. Let us therefore be *strong in faith*, remembering that thus it becomes us *to glorify* that *God* who condescends so far as to engage the honour of his word for the support of our souls. He who *hath promised is*

Ver. 17 20

e Fully satisfied the Divine justice for them.] By *satisfying the Divine justice*, "I mean, doing all that was necessary, amply and perfectly to secure the honour of the Divine government, in the pardon and acceptance of penitent and believing sinners;" but I do not mean "the payment of the debt, in such a sense as that our engagements to holiness should be dispensed with, or in any degree weakened, or our obligation to the free grace of the Father in our salvation transferred, or enervated." And I desire it may be remembered, and attended to throughout, that this is the sense in which I would use the phrase, wherever it occurs in any of my writings, and I hope it will not be found that I have ever deviated from it.

a *We*

is able to perform, for with him all things are possible. Already hath he done that for us which we had much less reason to expect, than we now have to hope for any thing that remains. He *delivered his son Jesus for our offences*, to redeem us by his blood from final and everlasting ruin. SECT. ix. Ver. 25

LET it be our daily joy that he was raised again for our justification; and let his resurrection be continually considered as a noble argument to establish our faith in him who performed this illustrious work of power and mercy. So shall *it be imputed to us likewise for righteousness*; yea, so shall the righteousness of our Redeemer be reckoned as ours, to all the purposes of our justification and acceptance with God. And though, by our transgression of the law, we can never inherit by any claim from that, which only worketh wrath and condemnation in consequence of our breach of it; yet shall we, by believing and obeying the gospel, find the promise sure to us, as the spiritual seed of Abraham, and be for ever happy in the enjoyment of that better Canaan; when every earthly inheritance shall be no more found. 24 22, 23 14, 15 16

SECT. X.

The excellency of the gospel dispensation is farther illustrated: believers being hereby brought into so happy a state, as turns even the heaviest afflictions of life into an occasion of joy. Rom. V. 1—11.

ROMANS V. 1.

THerefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

ROMANS V. 1.

WE have been reviewing the manner in which Abraham and David, these illustrious patriarchs, looked for justification and happiness, and in which we are to seek it, if we desire to succeed. We have been speaking of our adorable Saviour, as delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Let us now *therefore* reflect a little on those invaluable benefits, which we who have embraced this dispensation, whether Jews or Gentiles, enjoy in consequence of it. And here it is in the first place evident, that *being* thus *justified by* means of *faith* in Christ, *we have peace with God* [a]. Our guilty fears are silenced, and we SECT. x. Rom. V. 1.

a *We have peace with God.*" It seems very unreasonable to suppose, that when the apostle wrote such passages as this, and Eph. i. 1—3, he should mean to exclude himself, who was no Gentile; they are not therefore to be expounded, as spoken particularly of the Gentiles: nor could he surely intend by these grand descriptions, and pathetic representations, to speak only of such external privileges as

SECT. X.

Rom. V. 1.

we are taught to look up to him with sweet serenity of soul, while we no longer conceive of him as an enemy, but under the endearing character of a friend, and a father; even *through* the mediation and grace of *our Lord*
2 *Jesus Christ: By whom we have been introduced*[b] *by means of faith into that* state of *grace* and acceptance *in which we* now *stand* with humble boldness in his presence, and cheerful confidence, that nothing shall remove us from his favour. *And* by a farther consequence, we do not only rejoice in some considerable present privileges, but *boast in* a pleasant and assured *hope* of inheriting at length *the glory of God*; a state of perpetual splendor and happiness in the house and presence of our heavenly Father, in which he will, as it were, adorn us with the
3 rays of his own glory. *And not only* do we *so* boast in this hope, *but we also glory in our tribulation*[c] and affliction, which far from esteeming, as the Jews are ready to do, any token of reprobation or displeasure, we look upon as being, in this connection, the allotment of God's paternal love to us; that we may thereby be enabled to do him a more singular honour, and be prepared for a more exalted happiness; *knowing that tribulation*, under the influence of Divine grace, *worketh* a calm, silent, humble *patience*, a most beautiful and happy disposition

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience:

as might have been common to Simon Magus, or any other hypocritical *and wicked professor of Christianity*. And if he did not intend this, he must speak of all true Christians as such, and as taking it for granted, that those to whom he addressed this, and his other epistles, were in the general such, though there might be some few excepted cases which he does not think it necessary often to touch upon. And this is, after all, the *true key* to such passages in his epistles; and as such, I have used throughout my work; and as I have more particularly stated and vindicated *it* in the *postscript* which I have added *to the preface of my Sermons on Regeneration* in the *second edition*, I must beg leave to refer my reader thither, and hope I shall be excused from a more particular examination of that very different scheme of interpretation which Mr. Taylor has so laboriously attempted to revive. The main principles of it are, I think, well confuted by my pious and worthy friend *Dr. Guyse*, in the *preface to his Paraphrase of this Epistle*.

b *We have been introduced*, την προσαλωγην εσχηκαμεν] *Raphelius* has shewn from *Herodotus*, that προσαγωγη is often used as a *sacerdotal phrase*, and signifies, "being with great solemnity introduced, as into the more immediate presence of a deity in his temple, so as by a supposed interpreter, from thence called προσαγωγευς, *the introducer*, to have a kind of conference with such a deity."

c *We glory also in tribulation.*] The Jews might object to the persecution of Christians, (as we know they did to that of their master,) as inconsistent with what they concluded would be the state of the people of the Messiah. It is therefore with great propriety, that the apostle so often discourses on the benefit arising from the sufferings of true believers, by which he lays in the strongest answer to any such insinuation. And this delicacy of address is so apparent in many passages of the *epistles*, that I should swell the *notes* too much if I were accurately to trace it.

d Proof

disposition of mind, which is daily strengthened by exercise. *And* this *patience* produceth such an *experience* of God's supporting goodness, and such proof of our own sincere faith [d], strict integrity, and steady resolution, for him, as we are sure will be acceptable to him; *and* therefore this *experience* and proof of our graces, which like pure gold brighten in the furnace, worketh a more lively and triumphant *hope* of a glorious future reward. *And* this *hope*, sublime and confident as it is, *does not shame* and confound [*us*] with disappointment; yea we know it cannot, *because* we have already within ourselves the very beginning of that heaven at which it aspires. For *the love of God*, in the perfection of which the blessedness of that celestial world consists, *is*, in a plentiful effusion, *poured into our hearts by his Holy Spirit, which is given unto us*, and enables us to see his love amidst all his corrections, and to delight ourselves daily in him; though for the present he appoints us trials which may seem ever so rigorous.

SECT. X.

4 And patience, experience; and experience hope:

Rom. V. 4.

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

5

Now all these invaluable privileges and hopes, which make our lives so joyful amidst such various tribulations and extreme sufferings, are to be traced up to the death of Christ, and resolved into his love: *for when we were yet* in a *weak* and languishing, infirm and helpless state, destitute of all these Divine principles and hopes; yea incapable of delivering ourselves from the depths of guilt and misery, into which we were plunged; *Christ* most *seasonably died* for us, even *in the stead of the ungodly* [e], for Jews and Gentiles

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

6

d **Proof of our faith.**] Mons. *Saurin* very justly observes, that the word δοκιμη has this signification, and is a *metaphor*, taken from *gold proved by purifying fire*. Compare 1 Pet. i. 7; see Ecclus. ii. 5. *Saur. Serm.* Vol. VII. p. 159.

e *Died in the stead of the ungodly.*] By *ungodly* here, *Mr. Locke* understands *Gentiles*; as also by *weak*, *sinners*, *enemies*, &c. They are undoubtedly included; but it seems very inconsistent with the whole strain of the *apostle's* argument in the preceding chapters, to confine it to them. Compare chap. iii. 9—20, 22, 23: chap. iv. 5; chap. v. 20. I therefore all along explain such passages in the most extensive sense; and think nothing in the whole *New Testament* plainer, than that the gospel supposes every human creature to whom it is addressed, to be in a state of guilt and condemnation, and incapable of being accepted with God, any otherwise than through the grace and mercy which it proclaims. Compare John iii. 16, 36; chap. v. 24; 1 John iii. 14; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Luke xxiv. 47; and especially 1 John i. 10; than which no assertion can be more positive and express. *Albert (Observ. Sacr.* p. 304,) has well proved that κατα καιρον should be rendered *seasonably*; and *Raphelius (Not. ex. Xen. in ver.* 8.) has abundantly demonstrated, that υπερ ημων αποθανε signifies *he died in our room and stead*; nor can I ever find, that αποθανειν υπερ τινος has ever any other signification than that of *rescuing the life*

of

SECT. X.

Gentiles, when they were, as we have proved before, all under sin.

Rom. V. 7.

Now[f] this is a most memorable thing, and worthy our frequent, attentive, and affectionate consideration. For *scarcely would one* be willing to *die in the stead of a righteous man*, though we apprehended him in the most immediate danger; [*if*] *perhaps in the stead of a* remarkable *good* and benevolent *man*[g], *one would even dare to die*: for certainly it is but here and there one, in a great multitude, who would be willing to redeem the most eminently useful life at the price of his own. *But God hath recommended his* astonishing *love towards us*, and set it off as it were with this grand circumstance of high embellishment, if I may so speak, *that when we were yet sinners*, and therefore not only undeserving of his favour, but justly obnoxious to wrath and punishment, *Christ died in our stead*, that our guilt might be cancelled, and we brought into a state of Divine acceptance. Since *therefore* it hath pleased the blessed God to give us such an unexampled display of his love as this, how high may our expectations rise, and how cheerfully may we conclude that *much more being now justified by* the efficacy of *his* most precious *blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him!* For we can never imagine that God would provide at so expensive a rate for our justification, and then finally leave us under

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

of another at the expence of our own; and the very next verse shews, independant on any other authority, how evidently it bears that sense here; as one can hardly imagine any one would die for a good man, unless it were to redeem his life by giving up his own. How much higher, not only *Grotius*, but *Le Clerc*, carried their explications of this great doctrine, than some moderns have done, may be seen by consulting *Grotius's gloss* on 1 Pet. ii. 19. *(de Satisf. cap.* ix.) and *Le Clerc* on John i. 29.

f *Now*: γαρ.] It is very evident, that γαρ cannot have the force of an *illative particle* here, or in the preceding verse; and it is hardly possible to number all the passages in Paul's writings, to which the like remark may be applied.

g *Righteous—good.*] It is true, that in one sense *righteousness* must include *goodness*, as we owe to every man a benevolent affection, and are bound in duty to God to do all the good we can to the whole human species. But *he* may in common speech be called a *just* or *righteous man*, who gives to every one what is by law his due; and *he* a *good* or *benevolent man* who voluntarily abounds in kind and generous actions, to which no human laws can compel him. *Tully* has the like distinction, *(de Offic. lib.* 1. chap. x. *edit. Pierc.)* and it is admirably illustrated by *Raphelius, (Not. ex. Xen. in loc.)* by apposite quotations from other ancient writers. It may very possibly, (as *Godwyn* has shewn in his *Jewish Antiquities, lib.* 1. *cap.* ix.) bear some allusion to a distribution of mankind into the three classes, רשעים, and צדיקים, ערקים, *good men, righteous men*, and *sinners*, which some *rabbinical* writers mention.—All the *beauty* and *grace*, of this passage is lost, by reading αδικοι instead of δικαιοι, as the editor of the *new version* of 1727 does; without as I can find, any single authority: *for a wicked man no one would willingly die, though for a benefactor some have readily offered to die.* And αγαθος does not signify merely a *personal benefactor*, but in general a *benevolent man.*

under wrath; though we have acquiesced in the scheme of his grace for our deliverance. SECT. X.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

For if, as I have already maintained, when *we were enemies*, through the perverseness of our minds, and the rebellion of our lives, *we were reconciled to God by the death of his* own dear *Son*, and if foreseeing we should fall into this state of hostility, he made this wonderful provision for our being admitted to terms of peace; *how much more being* thus *reconciled, shall we be saved* from misery, and made completely happy *by his* recovered *life*, now he is risen from the dead, and ascended to glory? Rom. V. 10.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what extasies of holy joy may we justly survey these inestimable privileges, and blessed consequences of having embraced the gospel, and being *justified by faith* unfeigned! How great a happiness to have *peace with God*, with that omnipotent Being, who can at pleasure arm all nature against us, or for us! To *have access to him by Jesus Christ*, and daily converse with him as *our Father in heaven!* To *rejoice* in an assured *hope* of enjoying *glory* with Christ, in his presence; yea, of enjoying the God of glory. To see all affliction not only disarmed, but turned into matter of triumph, *while tribulation worketh experience, patience, and hope!* So may all *our* tribulations work, and be they ever so severe, they will be reasons for our joy and praise. The pain of them will soon be over; the happy consequences of them will be as lasting as our immortal souls. Ver. 1 2 3, 4

Let us endeavour to dilate our hearts, that we may receive the largest *effusions of the love of God, to be shed abroad* there. The love of God! That plant of paradise, which will spring up unto eternal life. And to excite it, let us be daily meditating upon the rich wonders of redeeming love and grace; adoring that *seasonable* interposition of Divine mercy, that when *we were weak* and guilty creatures, when we lay for ever helpless under a sentence of everlasting condemnation, that is, when we appeared thus in the eyes of him who *beholdeth things which are not as if they were, Christ died for us*, and gave a token of his love even for the worst of sinners, which few among the children of men are willing to give, with respect to the most upright and benevolent of their brethren. Since the love of God comes thus recommended, let us cordially embrace it, and awaken all the powers of our souls to a diligent care to secure the happy fruits; that we may not *receive the grace of God in vain.* If we do indeed experience in ourselves 5 6 7

SECT. X. ourselves, not only that there is a foundation laid for our *reconciliation*, but that we are actually *reconciled to God by the death of his* 10 *Son*, our hopes may rise high, that *we shall much more obtain* consummate *salvation by his life*. For surely it is infinitely more astonishing, that the Son of God should die to reconcile enemies, than that having subdued their hearts by his dying love, and received them to friendship as the purchase of his blood, he should employ his recovered life and extensive authority for their protection, and complete salvation.

SECT. XI.

The Apostle shews, that the calamities brought by the first Adam on his seed, are repaired with glorious advantage to all who by faith become interested in the second Adam. Rom. V. 11, *to the end.*

ROMANS V. 11.

SECT. XI. I HAVE been breathing out our hopes, and our joys, as we are Christians, and are taught by the principles of our Divine religion to rejoice, Rom. V. 11. not only in the prospect of glory, but even in tribulation itself. *And* now I must add, that it is *not only* [*so*] *but* that there is another grand consideration, which, though not yet mentioned, lies at the root of all our confidence and happiness; which is this, that *we boast in God* as invariably our covenant God and Father, *through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have now*, in these late times, *received the* great and important *reconciliation*[a], which not only averts the terrors of his wrath, but opens upon us all the blessings of his perpetual friendship and love.

ROMANS V. 11.

AND not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12 And *therefore*[b] we may from these premises infer, that the benefit which we believers receive from Christ[c], is equal to the detriment we

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death

a *Received the reconciliation.*] The word καλλαγη here has so apparent a reference to καλλαγημεν and καλλαγητε; in the preceding verse, that it is surprising it should have been rendered by so different a word in *our version*; especially as it is so improper to speak of our *receiving an atonement*, which God receives as made for our sins.

b *Therefore.*] Δια τουτο certainly does often signify *in this respect*; but there are some instances even among the texts collected by Mr. Taylor here, in which it may as well be rendered *therefore*: particularly Matt. xiii. 13; John ix. 23; chap. xii. 18; chap. xiii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 17; chap. xi. 30; Eph. i. 15. In all which places our rendering seems preferable to what he would propose.

c We believers] As this 12th verse is an inference from the 11th, it seems evident that they only are spoken of; for it is plain from comparing the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses with the first, that it is only they *who are justified by faith, who have peace with God, and who joy in him*

by

death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

we receive from Adam; yea, is on the whole greater than that; for we now obtain righteousness and life from one; *as by one man*, that is, Adam, the common father of the human species, *sin entered into the* new made *world, and death*, before unknown in the creation of God, entered *by sin; and so death passed* on from one generation to another *upon all men; unto which all have sinned* in him[d], that is, they are so far involved in the consequence of his first transgression, as by means of it to become obnoxious to death. SECT. xi. Rom. V. 12.

13 For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law.

And that this was indeed the case, and this offence the engine of mortality in the whole human species, we may infer from one very obvious fact, I mean the death of infants, from the very beginning; *for* from the fall of Adam *unto* the time when God gave *the law* by Moses, as well as after it, *sin was*, and appeared to be *in the world*, by the continual execution of its punishment, that is, death. *But* it is a self-evident principle, that *sin is not*, and cannot be, *imputed, where there is no law;* since the very essence of sin is the violation of a law. And consequently, if we see in fact that sin was imputed, we must conclude that the persons to whose account it appears to have been charged, were under some law. 13

14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression:

Nevertheless, it is certain *death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over* infants as well as others, over *those*, I say, *who had not sinned, according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam*[e], that is, who had never in their own persons offended God, as Adam their father did; *who*, with respect to the extent of his actions to all his seed, *was the figure*, or model 14

by Christ as having received the reconciliation. And this obvious remark clears the following passage of difficulties, which would be exceeding great, if it were to be considered without regard to this connection, and which have in fact misled many *commentators:* who for want of attending to it, have plunged themselves and their readers into great perplexity, and given a sense to the paragraph, of which it is by no means capable.

d *Unto which all have sinned:* εφ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον.] *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. II. p. 26,) would render it, *on account of whom;* and he produces some remarkable authorities for it, (compare Phil. iii. 12; Rom. x. 19; chap. xvi. 19; 1 Thess. iii. 7;) but I think those produced by Mr. Taylor, (from Gal. v. 13; Eph. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 14;) with the use of the particles in some of the purest *Greek classics*, sufficient to support his rendering, which I have here followed. See *his Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, Part I. p. 51, &c. *Note.*

e *Likeness of Adam's transgression.*] Mr. Locke and several more interpret this of the Gentiles, who did not sin against a *positive law.* But they might certainly have died for their transgression against the *natural law*, under which they were born, and for which the *apostle* expressly asserts, not only that they were in fact liable to *perish*, (chap. ii. 12, *&c.*) but that they knew they were *worthy of death*, (chap. i. *ult.*)

f *Figure,*

sect. xi. model[f] *of him who was to come*[g], that is, a kind of type of the Messiah, as being a public person and federal head.

Rom. v. 15. *Yet* I must observe by the way, that with respect to *the free-gift* of God in the gospel-dispensation, it [*is not* exactly *as the offence*, nor limited in all respects as that is; *for if by the offence of one many died*, if the whole human family, numerous as it is, become obnoxious to death and destruction thereby; how *much more hath the free grace of God, and the gift* [*which is granted*] *by* that *grace*, as manifested and displayed *in* that *one* greater and better *man Jesus Christ, abounded to many*, that is, to all the numerous family of believers.

16 *And* this in two very important respects. In the first place, *the gift* [*is not* merely, *as* the ruin that came upon us *by one that sinned*, in respect to the number of offences in question; *for the sentence of* but *one offence passed*] upon us *to condemnation*; and we were no farther affected by the subsequent sins of Adam, than by those of any intermediate parent: *but the gift* of Divine grace, exhibited in the gospel, [*is effectual*] *to* our *justification from* the guilt of *many offences*. It not only delivers us from the sentence to which we were from our birth liable on account of Adam's sin, but from that more grievous and dreadful sentence which we had brought upon ourselves in adult life by our innumerable

17 and aggravated personal transgressions. *Moreover* there is another important article in which the grace of the gospel exceeds the seeming severity, which attended the imputation of guilt from our first father Adam; namely, that *if by one*

model: who is the figure *of* him that was to come:

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead: much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of

f *Figure*, or model.] That the word τυπος has this signification, will appear from Acts vii. 44; Rom. vi. 17; Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. ii. 7; Heb. viii. 5; 1 Pet. v. 3

g *Of him who was to come*: του μελλοντος.] Here is evidently an *ellipsis*. Most commentators have explained it as referring to the great person that was to come, or in other words, *the future* [*Adam*,] that is, *Christ*. But Sir *Norton Knatchbull* would explain it of *mankind to come*. He thinks that Adam cannot with any propriety be called *a type of Christ*, as the *type* of a thing is its *shape, model*, or *representation*; and therefore if the thing be good, the *type* of it must be so too. Dr. *Milner*, in vindication of this interpretation, observes, that this will best agree with the *apostle's* design. For if Adam was to be considered as a *public person*, the *type, figure, or representation of mankind*, his conduct will, as the *apostle* says it does, affect infants. Dr. *Milner's Fading Flowers of Life*, p. 14.—But it may be sufficient to answer, that upon the common interpretation, there was plainly a correspondence between Christ and Adam, as each was a *public head*, though the influence of each on his respective seed was different; so that the whole reasoning of both these learned and ingenious writers seems inconclusive.

h Thank-

of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

one man's offence death reigned by one, over all his posterity, as we observed above, *they who* thankfully and obediently *receive* [h] *the* overflowing *abundance of* free *grace, and of the* munificent *gift of righteousness* exhibited in the gospel, *shall much more reign in life by* the *one* great Restorer and Recoverer of his seed, *even Jesus Christ:* that is, believers shall by him be brought to a much nobler and more excellent life than that from which Adam fell, and which they lost in him.

SECT. xi.

Rom. V. 17.

18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

Therefore, on the whole, you see, as I begun to observe to you before [i], that *as* [*the consequence*] *of one offence,* on the one hand, [*extended*] *to all men, to* bring *condemnation* upon them, *so also,* on the other side, [*the consequence*] *of one* grand *act of righteousness* [*extended*] *to all men* who receive and embrace it; securing *to* them that *justification* which will be crowned with the enjoyment *of* eternal *life.* 18

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

For as by the disobedience of one man many were constituted sinners, that is, became obnoxious to death, as if they themselves had sinned; *so by the* complete and persevering *obedience of one many shall be constituted righteous* [k], that is, they shall be treated as such in the day of God's final account; though they have no perfect righteousness of their own to plead, in consequence of which they should stand before God, and claim the reward. 19

But

h Thankfully and obediently *receive.*] It is so very plain, that the *abundant reign in life by Jesus Christ,* is appropriated to persons of a particular character, expressed here by *receiving the gift,* that it is surprising any should have spoken of it as *common* to the whole human race. And nothing is more evident, than that the word λαμβανω has often this sense, and signifies *being active in embracing* a benefit proposed, or a person offering himself under a character of importance. Compare John i. 11, 12; chap. iii. 11, 32; chap. v. 43; chap. xii. 48; chap. xiii. 20; Jam. v. 10; 1 John v. 9; 2 John 10; 3 John 7.

i As I begun to observe, &c.] This 18th verse seems connected with the end of the 12th; and all the intermediate verses do undoubtedly come in as a *parenthesis;* and the reader, by perusing the interwoven text alone, will observe, that these verses, *viz.* 12th, 18th, 19th, make one continued sentence. But I judged it necessary here, and elsewhere, to break the *paraphrase* into several sentences, lest the excessive length should have rendered the sense obscure, and the passage unwieldy and disagreeable. Many of Paul's sentences are, as they stand in the text, obscured by the length. Compare 2 Cor. xii. 14; chap. xiii.

k *Many shall be constituted righteous.*] To become liable to death for the offence of another, is indeed being thereby constituted a sinner, or treated as a sinner; since death is, in its primary view, to be considered as *the wages of sin,* or the animadversion of a righteous God upon it; but simply to be raised from the dead is not being made righteous, or treated as a righteous person; since it is a very supposable case, and will in fact be the case of millions, that a sinner may be raised in order to more condign and dreadful punishment. The whole interpretation therefore, which Mr. Taylor has given of this text, in this view, appears to me destitute of a sufficient foundation.

sect. xi.

Rom. V. 20.

But as for *the law* of Moses, that could not possibly procure this great benefit to them; for that *made a little entrance*[l], that is, took place among comparatively a very small number of mankind for a few ages, *that the offence might*, instead of being removed, *abound* much more than before; as in consequence of it many things became offensive to God, which were before indifferent, and the guilt of moral offences was aggravated by so express a declaration of the rule of duty, violated by them; so that on the whole, it seemed intended to convince and humble, rather than to justify. *Yet*, on the whole, God hath taken an occasion to glorify the riches of his mercy by that dispensation, and *where sin* has *abounded* under the most aggravating circumstances, *grace hath superabounded*, so as thereby to gain a superior and more illustrious triumph. *That as sin hath reigned in* the wide and universal devastation which *death* had made on those whom it had brought under that fatal sentence, *so grace might reign to* such a degree, as to bestow *eternal life* and happiness, *through* the glorious and complete *righteousness*[m] which we obtain *by Jesus Christ our Lord*, when we sincerely believe in him as our Saviour, and give up our souls to the authority of his equitable and auspicious government.

20 Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 11 LET us daily remember our relation to God by *Christ Jesus* and *glory in* this relation: saying frequently, "He is indeed our Father. This God, with all his adorable, unfathomable, immutable perfections, is our God. He will be our Guide unto death, and our portion for ever. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.* What relation can be so honourable, what can afford such an unfailing spring of perpetual joy!"

Let us honour him in all his dispensations; even those which may appear the most mysterious. In this number we are undoubtedly to reckon his constituting *Adam* the covenant-head of his

l *Made a little entrance.*] So παρεισηλθεν properly signifies, and is well rendered by the *Vulgate*, *subintravit*; in which sense παρεισαγειν is used, Gal. ii. 4. Thus the partial and limited entrance of the law is distinguished from that universal entrance of sin, which passed on all, as Mr. Locke well observes. This I think preferable to Mr. L'Enfant's rendering it, *the law intervened*, that is, between Adam and Christ.

m *Grace might reign to eternal life through righteousness*, &c.] This *trajection* the sense absolutely requires.

a *What*

his posterity, and involving our life or death in him; yea, adjusting the relation so, that our spiritual state should be greatly affected by his conduct, and we should by his transgression become the heirs, not only of death, but of moral pollution, and ultimately by virtue of our descent from him, *be shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.* SECT. XI. Ver. 12

It is a consideration which must carry awe and solemnity, grief and lamentation, throughout all ages, *that by one man sin entered into the world, and death* made such a progress *by* the entrance of *sin*, as *to pass upon all men* in consequence of that act. O God, how terrible are thy judgments! and yet how rich thy compassion in appointing the second *Adam* to repair the ruin and desolations of the first! Yea, more than to repair them; to deliver us from all our most aggravated transgressions, if we believe in him, and receive the gift of righteousness! to cause us to *reign in life by* him! to bring us to a more exalted and secure happiness than *Adam* himself enjoyed in the day in which he was created, or than *Eden*, the garden of God, could afford! 17

Let us adore these *super-aboundings of Divine grace*, and its *reign unto eternal life.* And let all our knowledge of the *law of God*, our distress under a sense of having broken it, and being thereby exposed to its condemning sentence, be considered as illustrating the riches of *that grace* whereby we are saved, and so animate us to returns of the humblest gratitude, and a persevering obedience. Amen. 20

SECT. XII.

The Apostle shews, that the gospel, far from dissolving our obligations to practical holiness, does strongly increase them; which is a consideration tending highly to recommend it to the esteem and acceptance of all. Rom. VI. 1—14.

ROMANS VI. 1.

WHAT shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

ROMANS VI. 1.

THUS we have asserted the doctrine of justification by faith, or in other words, of salvation by grace. And now let us consider how it is to be improved. *What shall we say then,* concerning the practical inferences to be drawn from it[a]? Shall we say, *Let us continue in* the habitual practice of *sin, that grace may abound* SECT. XII. Rom. VI. 1.

so

[a] *What shall we say then,* &c.] The *apostle* here sets himself more fully to clear and vindicate the doctrine he taught, from the consequence suggested before, chap. iii. 7, 8. He had then only in strong terms denied, and renounced it, but here removes the very foundation of it.

b *Dead*

SECT. XII.

so much the more, in pardoning and saving us? *God forbid*, that such an unworthy thought should ever arise in our hearts. We have disclaimed the consequence above, (chap. iii. 7, 8,) and we most solemnly disclaim it again. *We, who are dead to sin*[b], we, who by our profession are under such sacred engagements to mortify it with the greatest care, *how shall we yet live in it?* Surely it were the grossest contradiction that can be imagined. On the contrary, it is apparent, that nothing has so great a tendency to animate us to avoid sin, and to enable us to conquer it, as this doctrine of gospel-grace.

Rom. VI. 2.

2 God forbid? how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 *What*, Sirs, *know ye not*, and is it possible, that any of you should be ignorant of this great and obvious truth, *that as many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ*[c], that is, into the profession of the Christian faith; which is the case of us all; *have been baptized into his death*, and engaged to conform to the great purposes of it; which we know were to abolish sin?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

4 (1 Pet. iv. 1, 2; 1 John iii. 5.) *Therefore*, as this is the known obligation of this solemn initiatory ordinance, it may be said, that *we are buried with him in* that *baptism*[d] which we received as bringing us *into* a kind of fellowship in [*his*] *death*; most evidently for this purpose, *that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father*, and the operation of his illustrious, though mysterious power; *so we also should* continue, during the remainder of our days, to *walk in newness of life*; maintaining a course of conduct and actions entirely different from the former. *For* surely these two must go together; and we may conclude, that *if we are* thus *made to grow together in the likeness of his death*,

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death,

b *Dead to sin.*] Elsner shews how frequently moral writers among the *heathens* speak of wise and good men as dead to sensualities and animal pleasures. *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. II. p. 28.

c *Baptized into Jesus Christ.*] As the church at Rome seems to have been planted about the year 43, and this *epistle* was written in the year 58, that is, 15 years after, and yet the *apostle* speaks of the converted Romans in general as *baptized*, it must be supposed, as Dr. Gale well argues, that *baptism* was administered to those whose parents had been *Christians* at the time of their birth. Compare Col. ii. 12. See *Gale's Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 202, 203.

d *Buried with him in baptism.*] It seems the part of candor to confess, that here is an allusion to the manner of baptizing by *immersion*, as most usual in these early times; but that will not prove this particular circumstance to be *essential to the ordinance*; and, in whatever manner it was administered, if it were intended as a declaration of faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, as it is well known Christ died for sin, it would infer an obligation to die to it, and rise again to a holy life, which is the main point the apostle labours.

death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead, is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him;

death [e], *so also shall we be* united [*in the likeness*] *of* [*his*] *resurrection*, and shall rise up to a life spiritually new, as he rose to immortal life and vigour; *As we know this, that our old man*, that is, the whole system of our former inclinations and dispositions, which did by a fatal contagion spread themselves over the whole man, and were incorporated with it, *hath* now, as it were, *been crucified together*, [*with Christ*,] the remembrance and consideration of his cross co-operating in the most powerful manner with all the other motives which the gospel suggests, to destroy the former habits of sin, and to inspire us with an aversion to it, *that so the body of sin*, of which this old man did as it were consist, *might be enervated*, deposed, and destroyed [f]; *that we might no longer be in bondage to sin*; as we were before we were so happy as to know the gospel and the efficacy of this great doctrine of a crucified Saviour. *For he that is* thus *dead* with Christ *is set at liberty from sin* [g], sin being crucified to him and he to sin, on the principles mentioned before; just as the death either of the master or the slave, and much more evidently of both, dissolves the relation, and destroys the oppressive power which might before be exercised. *And* let me farther remind you, that as we are Christians, *we believe that if we be* thus *dead with Christ, we shall also live* together *with him*. We expect ere long to share with Christ in the complete holiness and

SECT. XII.

Rom. VI. 6.

7

8

e *Made to grow together.*] Dr. Wells observes, that this is the most exact import of συμφυλοι, and that it doth not signify merely being *planted together*.—As there is something harsh in the construction of ει and αλλα here, Beza would for αλλα read αμα; but Raphelius, in his notes from Herodotus has produced many parallel constructions in which αλλα signifies, *so*. As for the future σομεθα, he shews that it signifies a necessary consequence from the premises.

f *Enervated*, deposed, and destroyed: καταργηθη.] We render it *destroyed*, not only tormented or enfeebled, but utterly slain; and so the same word is rendered 2 Thess. ii. 18; and 1 Cor. xv. 26; perhaps not with exact propriety, Heb. ii. 14. *The utter destruction of the body of sin in us* is certainly intended in the gospel, but the particular import of this word is to *make void, debilitate, enervate, disannul, abolish or depose*. Compare Rom. iii. 31; chap. iv. 14: 1 Cor. ii. 6; chap. xiii. 8; chap. xv. 24; Eph. ii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 10. I have joined the significations in the *paraphrase*, and given the *version*, which appears to me the most exactly to answer the import of the *original*. The *body of sin* in believers is indeed an enfeebled, conquered, and deposed tyrant, and the stroke of death finishes its destruction.

g *Set at liberty.*] Δεδικαιωται signifies to be *justified* or *vindicated*; and here it seems to import *being delivered from future claims of subjection*. But this sense is so uncommon, that I am much in doubt whether it might not be rendered *justified* here, to intimate that a sense of justification by the cross of Christ is the great means of our delivery from the bondage of sin, as it animates and excites us to shake off its yoke.

SECT. XII.

and glory of the heavenly world; and you will easily understand, and I hope, easily feel the obligation, which that hope lays upon us, not only to cease from sin, but through his grace to cultivate universal holiness. We should ever be under the influence of these views, even to the very end of our course, *as we know that Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more; death no more reigneth over him,* as it seemed for awhile to do. And thus your immortal life and happiness, if you pursue it according to his direction and intention, is secure. *For whereas he died, he died once for all,* as a sacrifice *for sin,* to atone the injured justice of God, and repair the honours of his violated law. *And as he liveth, he liveth to God* for ever; his immortal life is entirely appropriated and devoted to his service, wherein we ought to make it our constant care to imitate his example. Suffer therefore the word of exhortation, grounded on this important principle, and *so also reckon yourselves to be* once for all *dead unto sin,* never to return under its power any more; *and* being thus made *alive,* let it be your care, in imitation of your Divine Master, to devote your recovered life *to* the honour and service of *God in Christ Jesus our Lord,* whose pattern and authority, in such a relation, concur to demand it of us. *Therefore let not sin reign* as an uncontroulable sovereign, now you have another Lord, so much greater and better; let not the irregular inclinations of your minds, when they may move *in your mortal bodies,* give law to them. The early conquest of sin over the human nature hath, alas, reduced them to the sad state of mortality; but do not go on, after such a deliverance hath been wrought out for you, in a servile and wretched manner, *to obey it in its licentious desires* and demands: *Neither present your members to sin* [*as*] weapons and *instruments of unrighteousness; but* with all devout affection and holy zeal, *present yourselves to God as* those who by his rich mercy and almighty power, are now made spiritually *alive,* and called out *from* that wretched state, in which you lay as among *the dead.* Conscious therefore of the obligations you lie under to him, who hath raised you to this new *and* glorious life, present all *your members* and powers *to God as* weapons and *instruments of righteousness*

Rom. VI. 9.

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

SECT. XII.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

ousness, to fight his battles[h], and to be for ever devoted to his service. Do it boldly and resolutely, and not as if you feared that your former master should recover his power and prove a severer tyrant, after you had thus attempted to revolt; *for* you may on the contrary be assured that *sin shall not have* any more *dominion over you as you are not under the law*[i], a dispensation of bondage and terror, *but under grace*, under the merciful dispensation of the gospel; which affords such consolations, and inspires such hopes, as may animate the soul to a much more successful combat with sin than the law could do, and give a much nobler assurance of a complete victory over it. Rom. viii. 1—4.

Rom. VI. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our hearts rise with indignation at the thoughts of so ungrateful an abuse of the Divine goodness, as to take encouragement from the aboundings of grace to continue in sin. Are not we likewise by profession *dead to it?* are not we bound by our baptismal vow, as the *ancient christians*, to whom Paul addresses himself, were? Or has the use and purpose of *baptism* been since altered, so as to allow a covenant with sin, an agreement with hell, even to those who are listed under the banners of a Saviour? *Is Christ then* become *the minister of sin*, or shall his death lose all its effect, while we profess to honour the solemn memorials of it. Recollecting that *we are not under the law but under grace*, let so glorious a dispensation animate us to resolutions proportionably heroic; and may the remembrance of the death of the Son of God in concurrence with that of his *resurrection*, engage us to walk in newness of life, if we desire another day to be planted into the likeness of that resurrection, and to rise victorious and triumphant from the grave.

Ver. 2 14 4 5

No more let us return under the power of that spiritual death, from which Christ, at the price of his own life, hath delivered us; but let us live to God; solemnly presenting our bodies and our souls to *him*, to be honoured as the instruments of his service, and employing each of our members, according to its proper office,

10, 13

h *Instruments* to fight his battles.] The word ὁπλα properly signifies *weapons*, and in this sense it has a beautiful propriety.

i *Under the law.*] The *Mosaic law* may be particularly intended; and the propriety of what is here said, when considered in reference to that, is illustrated by that excellent discourse of the *apostle* in the viith *chapter*; but it may very well imply that we are not so under *any law*, as to be utterly condemned for want of a *legal*, that is, a *perfect righteousness*; an apprehension of which would tend utterly to discourage the soul, in all its attempts to free itself for the future from the dominion of sin.

SECT. XII.

office, for his glory. *We are alive from the dead*, we are raised by a Divine power. Let us therefore daily set ourselves as in the presence of the God of our renewed lives, and account that time lost in which we are not acting for him. Without this, in vain do we know the vital truths of his gospel, in vain do we plead for them, and amuse ourselves with a sanguine hope of bearing the image of Christ in *glory*, if all these powerful arguments cannot now engage us to bear it in *holiness*.

Ver. 10, 11

SECT. XIII.

The apostle takes this opportunity of urging on the christians at Rome, that holiness to which they were so strongly obliged by the gospel. Rom. VI. 15, *to the end.*

ROMANS VI. 15.

SECT. XIII.

I HAVE just been reminding you christians of your great privileges; that you are now under a dispensation of the most glorious grace in the gospel, and not under the restraints, nor under the terrors of the Mosaic law. And *what then* are we to infer? *Shall we* take encouragement from thence to offend him to whose distinguishing goodness we are so much obliged, and *sin* securely and presumptuously, *because we are not under the law, but under* the *grace* of the gospel? *God forbid!* The inference would be so odious, and so dangerous, that though I disclaimed it before, (ver. 1.) I cannot too frequently guard you against it. And should you allow yourselves to argue thus, it would sufficiently prove that you do not belong to Christ; however you may glory in a pretended external relation. *Know ye not, that to whomsoever ye present yourselves* [*as*] *servants*, actually *to obey* his commands, *his servants you are?* Not his whose name ye may bear without practically acknowledging his authority, but his *whom you* in fact *obey*. Least of all can you divide yourselves between two contrary masters, but must *either* be entirely the servants *of sin*, which you know by a certain consequence leads *to* eternal *death*, *or* entirely the servants of God, by a course *of* resolute and persevering *obedience* which, notwithstanding your former failures, will securely lead *to righteousness* and life. *But thanks be to God, that whereas you were*, once *the servants of sin*, this is to be spoken of as a bondage past and gone; and that *ye have* now

Rom. VI. 15.

ROMANS VI. 15.

WHAT then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from

from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

now *obeyed*, not in profession alone, but *from the heart, the model of doctrine into which ye were delivered*, as into a model[a]; that your whole temper and life might be formed and fashioned into an amiable and glorious correspondence with it. *And* therefore *being* thus *made free* 18 *from sin, ye are become the servants of righteousness*, and are at once enabled, and obliged to lead a life of true piety and exemplary goodness.

SECT. XIII.

Rom. VI. 17.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

I speak as a man, and upon the common prin- 19 ciple of human equity and justice, as well as with a reference to civil customs, with which you Romans are so familiarly acquainted. And I reason thus with you, *because of the weakness of your flesh*, because of those infirmities and temptations arising from it; against which I would endeavour to fortify you by every consideration that may render you victorious over it. *As ye have*[b] in time past, while ignorant of the gospel, and many of you the slaves of heathen vice and idolatry, *presented your members servants to uncleanness*, and *to* other kinds of *iniquity*, into which that debauchery too naturally leads; *so* let it *now* be your care *to present your members servants of righteousness*, in order *to* the practice of universal *holiness*.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

And it is very fit that this should be your 20 entire employment; *for when ye were servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness*, you never did any single action that was truly good, and on the whole acceptable to God, because none was performed from such principles as could intitle it to his complete approbation. Now surely you should be as ready to obey righteousness as you have been to obey sin, and shew as much zeal in the best as you have done in the worst of causes. To engage you *therefore* to this, consider, *what fruit* or advantage *did* 21 *you*

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

a *Model of doctrine*, &c. εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον διδαχης.] That τυπος may properly be rendered *model*, see *note* f on Rom. v. 14, and add to the instances there given Elsner's *note* on this place; and see Dr. *Sykes of Christianity*, p. 178.—Mr. Locke thinks it is an elegant *metaphor*, to represent the delivery of a servant over from one master to another, and that the gospel, expressed by the form of *sound words*, is the master succeeding to the law. But it seems more probable, that it may allude to *melted metal* being formed by the mold into which it is poured; and it finely expresses that pliancy of temper with respect to the gospel, which constitutes so lovely a part of the true *Christian's* character.

b *As ye have.*] It is in the *original* ωσπερ γαρ: but γαρ is here most evidently an *expletive*, as in *Greek* it often is. It is of some moment to observe this; and I think it had been better, if our translators had more frequently attended to it.

c Eternal

SECT. XIII.

you then derive from those things, of the very remembrance of *which you are now* heartily *ashamed;* which you would not be, if you had indeed obtained any solid advantage by them; whereas this is far from being the case, *for the* certain *end of those things* [*is*] *death. But* remember, you have *now* what is most honourable and most advantageous in your view; for *being set free from sin, and engaged to God as his servants* and property, *you have your fruit unto holiness,* in which you find a present and most solid advantage; *and the end* you have in view is nothing less than *eternal life:* such is the infinite difference, and so advantageous the exchange you have made. *For* eternal *death* [*is*] *the* proper *wages* and desert *of sin,* and is all the gain which its wretched slave will have to shew from the hand of his tyrannical master in the great day of future account[c]: *but eternal life* [*is*], not as in the former instance, the justly deserved retribution of the action, but *the gift of* a gracious and bountiful *God in Christ Jesus our Lord,* to whom we are to ascribe it, that any of our services are accepted, and much more that they are recompensed with a munificence worthy the Lord of all.

Rom. VI. 21.

ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 15 BEING set at liberty from the condemning sentence of God's *law,* let us charge our souls, by all the ties of gratitude, that we do not turn his *grace* into wantonness; or deceive ourselves with vain words in a matter of infinite importance. We cannot be at the same time the *servants of God* and *the servants of sin;* and certainly our understandings must be darkened to infatuation, 17 if we can long doubt whose service we should prefer. *The work* 23 *of righteousness is peace,* the *effect of it quietness and assurance for ever,* (Isa. xxxii. 17;) but *death is the wages of sin,* and it shall be repayed to all that go on in it. And O what, and how terrible a death! *to be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,*

c Eternal *death*—in the great day of future account.] I see no imaginable reason to believe, as some late writers have intimated in their *paraphrase* on this verse, that *death* here signifies *being cast out of existence.* See chap. ii. 12. note i. If this could be inferred with relation to *wicked heathens* from the places before us, it might also, contrary to the opinion of these authors, be concluded to be the case of *wicked Christians* from chap. viii. 13. The truth is, that *to die* signifies to fall under the capital sentence of the Divine law; and it is well known, that *being cast into the ever-burning lake* is in this view called *death,* Rev. xxi. 8.

brimstone, which is the second death. How merciful are all the repeated admonitions which warn us to flee from it! Let us all judge, that it is already too long that we *have yielded ourselves the servants of sin:* too long that *our members*, made for the service of their Creator, devoted perhaps with great solemnity to our Redeemer, have been abused and prostituted *as the instruments of unrighteousness.* Surely it is too much time that we have already spent, too much vigour that we have already exerted in so base a servitude. For the future let us act as those who *are made free from sin.* SECT. XIII. 18, 19 22

And to animate us to it, let us often reflect how *unfruitful* the works of darkness have been found; in what *shame* they have already ended; in what shame and everlasting contempt they must end, if they be finally pursued. And let us daily direct our eye to that everlasting life, that crowns the happy prospect of those who *have their fruit unto holiness.* Blessed effect of serving God now, to serve and enjoy him for ever! to enjoy, through eternal ages, the pleasures of a nature thoroughly sanctified, and the sight and favour of that God, who is the original source and pattern of sanctification! It is the glorious mark at which we are aiming. Let us pursue it steadily and resolutely; yet always remembering that it *is the gift of God*, and never presuming to think of so glorious a remuneration as the *wages* of any duty we can perform. Alas! the imperfections of our best services daily forfeit the blessings of time: how impossible then is it, that the sincerity of them, amidst so many frailties and defects, should purchase the glories of eternity! 21 22 23

SECT. XIV.

The Apostle enters upon his design of taking off the believing Jews from their fond attachment to the Mosaic law, now they were, in a spiritual sense, married to Christ by the gospel. Rom. VII. 1—6.

ROMANS VII. 1.

KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath

ROMANS VII. 1.

I HAVE been endeavouring to direct your regards to the gospel, and to Christ as there exhibited, in order to your justification and salvation. Now you may perhaps be ready to object, that you, who are Jews, will certainly be out of the way of obtaining those privileges, if you should neglect the Mosaic law, the Divine authority of which none can reasonably question. *But know ye not, brethren, (for I am* now *speak-*

SECT. XIV. ROM. VII. 1.

SECT. XIV.

speaking to those that are supposed to be familiarly *acquainted with the* contents of that *law* for which they are so zealous;) *that*, on the principles which *the law* itself lays down, it *ruleth over a man* only *so long as it liveth*[a]: its dominion over particular persons can, at the utmost, last no longer than till it is itself abrogated; for that is as it were its death, since the Divine authority going along with it was the very life and soul of the law. Suppose that to cease, and the letter of the precept is but a dead corpse, and with respect to its obligation as if it had never been. Just as it is, according to the law itself, with respect to the power of an husband over his wife, which death entirely dissolves: *for the married woman is* indeed *bound* and confined *by the law to her husband while he is alive; but if* [*her*] *husband be dead, she is set at liberty from* any farther subjection to *the law of* [*her*] *husband*, that is, from that law which had given him a peculiar property in her, and authority over her. *Therefore if she become the property of another* man[b], *whilst her husband liveth, she carries the* infamous *name of an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is set at liberty from the* obligation of the *law* that bound her to him, *so as to be no more* subject to the shame and punishment of *an adulteress; though she become the property of another* man: for death having interposed between them, hath dissolved the former relation; he is dead to her, and she to him. *Thus ye also, my* dear *brethren, are* in effect *dead to the* Mosaic *law by the body of Christ*[c]; his death and sufferings having

Rom. VII. 1.

hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.

3 So then, if while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law

a *So long as it liveth*: εφ οσον χρονον ζη.] It would be contrary to the *apostle's* design, to suppose the sense of this to be, as *our translation* renders it, *as long as he*, that is, the man in question *liveth*: for he professedly endeavours to prove, that they had out-lived their obligations to the *law*. Elsner would connect ανθρωπω with νομος, and render it, *the law* and authority *of the husband continues in force, as long as he*, that is, *the husband liveth*, and produces authorities to prove that κυριευω is often applied to the *obliging force of a law*, or that *matrimonial customs* are sometimes called *laws*. (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 31.) But this, if it avoid as he pleads, one *tautology*, certainly occasions another, for the 2d verse plainly expresses this sense; and it would require a transposition not to be allowed without more apparent reason. Our rendering is more natural, and suits the connection with the following verses, in which the *law* is represented as the *first husband*, whose decease leaves them free to be married to Christ.

b *If she become the property of another*, (εαν γενηται ανδρι ετερω,) *while her husband liveth*, &c.] The *apostle* here speaks in the general, not entering exactly into every excepted case that might be imagined; to infer therefore, contrary to our Lord's express decision elsewhere, that *adultery* is not a sufficient foundation for *divorce*, seems very unreasonable; though Bishop Burnet assures us that great stress was once laid on the argument. *Burn. Hist. of the Reformation*, Vol. II. p. 57.

c *By the body of Christ.*] He is to be con-

aw by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

having now accomplished its design, and abrogated its authority: and this, with a gracious intent, *that ye might be*, as it were, *married to another*, [*that is,*] *to him who was* in so glorious and triumphant a manner *raised from the dead*, no more to die; *that* in consequence of this new marriage, *we might bring forth fruit unto God* in all the ways of holy obedience. SECT. XIV. Rom. VII. 4.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death:

And ye should do it with the greatest zeal; 5 *for when we were in the flesh*, that is, under the comparatively carnal dispensation of Moses, a variety of *sinful passions*, accidentally occasioned and irritated *by the law, were active in our members, so as* to produce visible sinful actions, and in them *to bring forth* a very different *fruit* from that which I have just been mentioning; even as I observed before, (chap. vi. 21, 23,) such fruit as would expose you *to* eternal *death*, if God were to be strict to mark your offences, and if his mercy did not interpose to break the fatal connection: a circumstance which it is of the utmost importance seriously to reflect upon.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

But now we are set at liberty from our obligation to *the law*, that obligation *in which we were held, being* in effect *dead*, or abrogated (as I told you above, ver. 1—4,) *so as* that now you are, in a more liberal manner, and from nobler principles, *to serve* God as your Master and Father in Christ, *in the newness of the Spirit, and not* [*in*] *the oldness of the letter*[d]: that is, you are to live as those that are renewed by the Holy Spirit of God, in a rich abundance poured out upon you under this new and better dispensation, whereby you are brought to observe the spiritual meaning and design of the law; being no longer bound by these literal and ceremonial precepts which were indeed obligatory long since, but now begin to be antiquated and out of date. (Heb. viii. 13.) 6

IMPROVE-

considered here as testifying by the authority of a *Christian apostle*, that this was the design of Christ's death; so that all he does in his argument here, is to shew, that allowing it to have been thus, (as *Jewish believers* all died,) their freedom from the *Mosaic law* followed on the very principles of *that law* itself.

d *Newness of the Spirit, not* [*in*] *the oldness of the letter.*] This is the *literal version*; but *new spirit, and old letter*, are tantamount expressions, and are more agreeable to the turn of our language.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XIV. GOD hath conferred upon all Christians this singular honour, that the whole body of them should be represented as *espoused to Christ.*

Ver. 4 Let us always remember, how we are engaged by that sacred relation, *to bring forth fruit unto God.* And may the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ put continual vigour into our obedience, while we regard him as the ever-living Lord, to whom our obligations are indissoluble and everlasting.

5 Too much have *sinful passions* reigned in our flesh, during our unconverted state. In too many instances have they *wrought* effectually *to bring forth fruit unto death.* And we owe it to the wonderful mercy and forbearance of God, that death, eternal death, hath not long since been the consequence.

6 *Being freed from the* yoke of the ceremonial *law,* being freed also from the condemning sentence of that moral law, under the obligations of which by the constitution of our intelligent and rational nature we are all born; let us thankfully acknowledge the favour, and charge it upon our grateful hearts, that we *serve God in newness of spirit* and of life. To engage us to this, may we experience more abundantly the renewings of the Holy Ghost; and the actions of our lives will be easily and delightfully reduced to the obedience of these precepts which his omnipotent and gracious hand hath inscribed on our hearts!

SECT. XV.

To wean the believing Jews from their undue attachment to the law of Moses, the apostle represents at large, how comparatively ineffectual its motives were, to produce that holiness, which, by a lively faith in the gospel, we may so happily obtain. Rom. VII. 7, *to the end.* VIII. 1—4.

ROMANS VII. 7.

SECT. XV. I HAVE been observing above, to those of my Christian brethren who were educated in the Jewish religion, that irregular passions, while we were under the law of Moses, and were acquainted with no superior dispensation, did in some instances, by means of the law, operate so as to bring forth fruit unto death. And it is necessary, that I should not only farther illustrate that important remark, but expressly caution against any mistake with relation to it. *What shall we say then,* or what do we intend by that

Rom. VII. 7.

ROMANS VII. 7.

WHAT shall we say then? *Is* the law sin?

sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

that assertion? [*that*] *the law* itself [*is*] *sin*, that there is any moral evil in it, or that it is intended by God, or adapted in its own nature, to lead men into sin? *God forbid!* We revere the high authority by which it was given, too humbly, to insinuate any thing of that kind. And *indeed* there are many particulars in which *I should not have known sin, but by the law*[a], I should not, in a mere state of nature, have apprehended the evil of them; which I now learn from finding them so expressly prohibited. *I had not* for instance *known* the sinfulness of *lust*, or irregular desires, *unless the law had said*, "*Thou shalt not covet*[b];" from whence it was easy to infer, that this law takes cognisance of the heart as well as of external actions. *But* as soon as I had understanding enough to perceive that the law forbade the indulgence of irregular desires, I found that I had in fact broken it; and thereby incurred the penalty, without any hope of help and deliverance from the law. And this, while I looked no farther, naturally tended to throw my mind into a state of dejection and despair. So that I may say, that *sin taking occasion from the* awful sanction of the *commandment*[c], the wrath and ruin which it denounced, brought me into so sad a situation of mind,

SECT. XV.

Rom. VII. 7.

8 But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without

8

a *I should not have known sin*, &c.] The *apostle* here, by a very dexterous turn, changes the person, and speaks as of himself. This he elsewhere does, (Rom. iii. 6; 1 Cor. x. 30, chap. iv. 6,) when he is only personating another character. And the character assumed here is that of a man, first *ignorant of the law*, then *under it*, and sincerely desiring to please God, but finding to his sorrow, the weakness of the motives it suggested, and the sad discouragement under which it left him; and last of all, *with transport discovering the gospel*, and gaining pardon and strength, peace and joy by it. But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself, as the *confirmed Christian*, that he really was, when he wrote this *epistle*, is not only foreign, but contrary to the whole scope of his discourse, as well as to what is expressly asserted, chap. viii. 2.

b *Thou shalt not covet.*] This, by the way, proves, that Paul thought the covetousness forbidden in the *tenth commandment* related to the *heart*, and not merely, as some have represented it, to any *overt act*, to an attempt to take away what belongs to another. And this might be a hint to all thinking men, that the secret powers of their souls were under a Divine inspection, and that much guilt might be contracted which did not appear to any human eye.

c *Sin taking occasion from the commandment.*] Most commentators have explained this, as signifying, that sin was quickened by the prohibition; the inclination of human nature in general being like that of a froward child, who will do a thing *because it was forbidden*, and perhaps is, as it were, reminded of an evil, on hearing it mentioned in a prohibition. But, not to examine how far this is a universal case, it must surely be acknowledged, that all lust does not arise from hence, much being previous to any possible knowledge of God's law, whether revealed or natural. I therefore incline to the interpretation which Mr. Dunlope has given, in his *excellent Sermon on this passage*, the tenor of whose thoughts I have followed in the whole of my *paraphrase upon it*, begging leave to refer my reader to his discourse, for the reasons that have determined me to it. Compare Jer. ii. 25. See *Dunl. Serm.* Vol. II. p. 46, 47.

SECT. XV.

mind, and left me so little strength and spirit to resist future temptation, when I seemed already undone; that it might in a manner be said to have *wrought powerfully in me all manner of concupiscence*[d]: such advantage did sin gain against me. And I mention this, as the effect of my becoming acquainted with the law, *because* while I was ignorant of the sentence, and considered myself as *without the law* of God, *sin* [*was*] *dead;* I was no more aware of any danger from it, or any power it had to hurt me, than if it had been a dead enemy. *For I once was*, as it were, *alive without the law*[e], considering myself as a man acquainted with it, I may say I was comparatively cheerful and happy; *but when the commandment came*, and I became acquainted with it, in its wide extent, unspotted purity and awful sanctions, then *sin*, immediately *came to life again;* it sprung up against me as a living enemy, armed with instruments of destruction; *and I*, as incapable of resisting it, fell down, and *died;* finding myself unable to resist my miserable doom, *And* thus *the commandment which* [*was*] in its original constitution [*intended*] *for life*[f], and calculated so to regulate men's temper and conduct, and if perfectly obeyed, to give them a legal claim to life and happiness, was quite changed in this respect. For *I* having thus broken it, and by such breach brought its condemning sentence upon me, really *found* it [*to be*] *unto death.* I found it attended with deadly consequences, both as it consigned me over to destruction for past sin, and occasionally, though not intentionally, proved productive of new guilt and misery. *For sin*, as I before said, *taking occasion by the* terror and curse of the violated *commandment*, and representing the great Lawgiver

Rom. VII. 8.

9

10

11

out the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment which *was ordained* to life I found *to be* unto death.

11 For sin taking occasion by the commandment,

d *Wrought for me.*] The word κατεργαζομαι in many places signifies *to operate in a powerful and efficacious manner*, (compare 2 Cor. iv. 17; chap. v. 5; chap. vii. 11; chap. xii. 12,) and may well here signify a *strong irritation* of what might, without it, have been in some degree natural.

e *I was once alive without the law.*] The *apostle* cannot, as Mr. Locke supposes here, speak in the person of the whole Jewish people, and in this clause refer to the time between Abraham and Moses; for, not to examine how far this description would suit them then, we must on that principle of interpretation suppose, they are all represented in the *close of the chapter, as believing in Christ;* which alas! we know to have been very far from being their case.

f *Intended for life.*] The law may be said to have been *intended for life*, though by sin made the occasion of death; as medicines, which not being rightly applied, prove fatal, may nevertheless be said to have been *intended for cure.*

g *So*

mandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

giver as now become my irreconcileable enemy, *deceived me* into a persuasion that I could be no worse than I was, *and thereby it slew me;* it multiplied my mortal wounds, and rendered my case still more desperate. SECT. XV. Rom. VII. 11.

12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

So that you see, upon the whole, *the law* in the general [*is*] acknowledged to be *holy, and the* particular *commandment* in question is acknowledged to be agreeable to the *holy* nature of God, *just* in reference to the reason of things, *and* on the whole, in its consequences *good,* and subservient to men's happiness, if they continue in a state of rectitude. 12

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

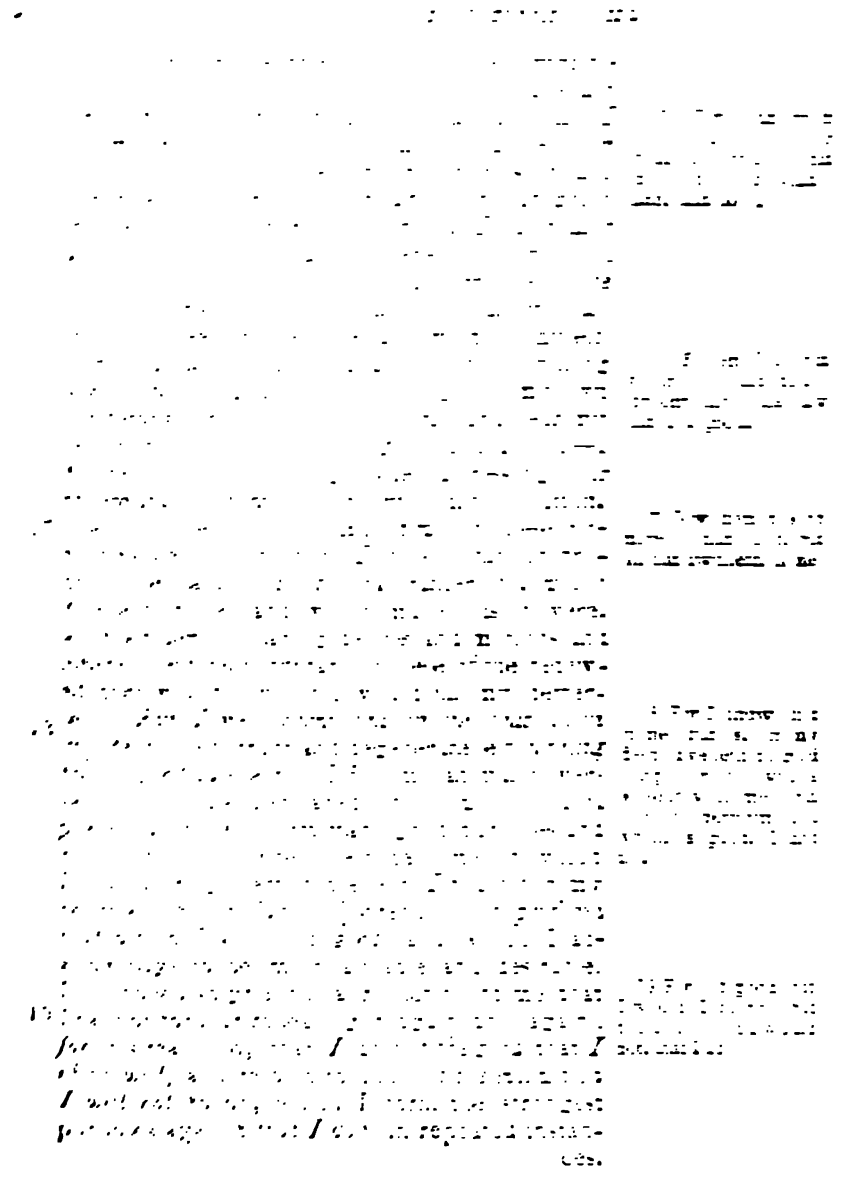
Was then that which was good in itself *made death to me?* Shall I charge my ruin on this holy and good law of God? By no means. *God forbid* I should ever utter any thing like that. *But* I must rather charge it upon *sin,* which by means of so holy an instrument undid me. I say it again, Sin was made death to me, *so that it appeared to be sin* indeed [g] (that odious dreadful thing, of which nothing can be said worse than that it is itself, as *working death in me, by* the occasion of *that which is* so eminently *good: that* so *sin might by the commandment* thus perverted, *appear exceeding sinful,* and stand forth in all its native and detestable colours; capable of turning the law itself into a means of producing the guilt it so solemnly forbade, and the ruin it was intended to prevent. 13

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

It is on this therefore that I lay all the blame; *for we* well *know that the law is spiritual,* and as it extends to the Spirit, was intended to purify and exalt it, and to assert its superiority over the meaner part of our nature. *But,* alas, may the man I have been describing and representing above, be ready to say, *I am* in a great measure *carnal, and* in so many instances subdued by the remaining infirmities of my nature, that I am ready passionately to cry out, I am even *sold under sin* [h]; which often rises with an almost 14

g *So that it appeared; ινα φανη.*] Elsner contends that φανη is an *expletive* here; but I choose not to allow any word in scripture to be an *expletive,* that may fairly and naturally be expounded into any significant sense; as it is plain this may here be. See *Elsner Observ.* Vol. II. p. 57.

h *Sold under sin.*] This is often urged as an argument, that the *apostle* here speaks in the person of a *wicked man,* and is represented as a phrase parallel to 1 Kings xxi. 20; 2 Kings xvii. 17; where some of the worst of men are described as having *sold themselves to do evil.* But the diversity of the expression is very obvious; and yet had this person been represented as lamenting that *he had sold himself to sin,* it might have been understood as the language of penitent remorse for



I appeare not | *October the 31st.* one would imagine Paul would have rebuked

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

ces. *If, therefore,* as I said before, *I do that which I would not,* and am, as it were, overpowered in some cases and circumstances, contrary to the settled and prevailing bent and inclination of my soul; *it is no more I that do it, but sin, which,* as another person, *dwelleth in me* [l], and like an evil demon, when it has taken possession of a man, uses my faculties and powers, over which it usurps an abhorred dominion, to carry on its own contrary and destructive interests. Rom. VII. 20.

21 I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

I find then, upon the whole, *a* sort of constraining *law,* which so influences me, *that when I would go good, evil is* in fact *present with me.* 21

22 For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man:

For with regard to the inner-man, that is, my mind, the better and nobler powers of my intellectual nature, *I delight in the law of God* [m], I most heartily approve it, and look upon its whole system with complacency, as what I could rejoice to be conformed to in the completest manner, and highest degree. 22

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

But, alas, *I see another,* and quite opposite *law,* of vicious and irregular inclinations, seated *in my members* which taking its rise from a lower and meaner principle, is continually *making war against the* better *law of my mind, and* too frequently *captivating me to the law of sin, which is,* as I said, seated *in my* corporeal *members.* 23

24 O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Wretched man that I am! Do I often cry out in such a circumstance, with no better supports and incitements than the law can give; *who shall rescue me,* miserable captive as I am, *from the body of this death?* From this continual burden which I carry about with me, and which is cumbersome and odious, as a dead carcase, tied to a living body, to be dragged along with it wherever it goes [n]. 24

Thus

buked such a one with great severity, and answered these vain and hypocritical pleas; whereas he represents this person afterwards, as with joy embracing the gospel, and so obtaining superior strength upon the full manifestation of pardoning grace there.

l *Sin that dwelleth,* &c.] This seems indeed no more than a repetition of verse 17; but it is a graceful and expressive repetition, and shews how near the affair lay to the heart of the person thus complaining, and in what sad and frequent successions the complaint was renewed. The beautiful passage in the 6th book of *Xenephon's Cyropædia,* (p. 328. *edit. Hutchin.* 1738. 8vo.) where Araspus complains of two souls contending within him, (a passage which it is very possible St. Paul might have read,) contains an agreeable illustration of *this paragraph.*

m *I delight in the law of God, after the inner-man.*] This is so sure a trace of real piety, and is represented in scripture as, in this view, so decisive; that if it be supposed a true representation of the character, we must surely allow it to have been that of a truly good man; whatever lamented imperfections might attend it.—Plato uses the phrase ο ενδοτερος ανθρωπος for the *rational part of our nature.*

n Dead carcase, &c.] It is well known, that

SECT. XV.

Thus I bemoan myself, when I think only of the Mosaic law, the discoveries it makes, the motives it suggests, and the circumstances in which it leaves the offender: but in the midst of this gloomy prospect, a sight of the gospel revives my heart; and I cry out as in a kind of rapture, as soon as I turn mine eyes to it, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord* [o], in whom he now reveals himself to me, and by whom he delivereth me from this bondage and misery. *So then, whereas I myself* [p], *with* the nobler powers of *my spirit serve the law of God, though* in too many instances I am so oppressed *with* the infirmity of *my flesh*, that I am subdued by *the law of sin: [There is] now* under the gospel-dispensation, *no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* [q], that is, to those, who making a profession of the Christian faith, do in the main course of their lives verify that profession; governing themselves by spiritual views, and maxims, and not by carnal appetites and interests. I say it again, I thank God for this dispensation with all the powers of my soul; *for* though, when considering myself as only under the law, I made such melancholy complaints, *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, that glorious gospel which is attended with an abundant effusion of the vivifying and animating Spirit, *has* now recovered me, mortally wounded, as I seemed to have been, and *set me at liberty from* that lamented captivity to *the law of sin and death* [r]. *For God hath* now, by a gracious and

Rom. VII. 25.

Rom. VIII. 1.

2

3

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.

ROMANS VIII. 1. *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could

that some ancient writers mention this as a cruelty practised by some tyrants on miserable captives who fell into their hands; and a more forcible and expressive image of the sad case represented, cannot surely enter into the mind of man.

o *I thank God through Jesus Christ.*] For ευχαριστω τω Θεω, some *copies* read η χαρις τε Θεω, *the grace of God*, which to be sure makes a noble sense; but that of the received, and much more authentic *copies* comes very near it, and in the main coincides with it.

p *Whereas I serve, &c.—there is now no condemnation*, &c.] I think, there is not in the whole *New Testament* a more unhappy division between two *chapters* than what has been made here, not only in the midst of an argument, but even of a sentence. Αρα νυν, and αρα νυν, answer so evidently to each other, that I think it plain, the former should be rendered, *whereas*, and then the sense appears plain and strong. I must confess this to be an uncommon use of αρα; but if it be, as it often is, an *expletive*, it will come to much the same.

q *To those in Christ Jesus, who walk, &c.*] It is certain, that to *be in Christ*, though it sometimes imports a true and sanctifying faith, (2 Cor. v. 17.) at other times expresses only an external profession (John xv. 2) and as the article τοις is not repeated, I think it is plain the latter clause limits the former, which justifies our rendering. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 1.

r *Hath set me at liberty, &c.*] It is to be observed, that the same person who spoke before is here represented as continuing the discourse, and speaks of himself as delivered from the bondage so bitterly complained of.

s *What*

could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh:

and most wonderful appearance [*done*] *what it was impossible for the law to do, in that it was* comparatively *weak through* the great infirmity *of the flesh*[s], against which in so corrupt a state it could not, merely by its own principles, sufficiently provide[t]: [*he*,] I say, the great Father of mercies, *by sending his own* well-beloved *Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh*[u], with all those innocent infirmities which the first apostacy of our nature brought upon human flesh, *and* by appointing him *to be a sacrifice* to make expiation *for sin*[x], *who hath condemned sin in the flesh.* Instead of being victorious, it is now brought under a sentence of death and destruction, which we, animated by these glorious motives of the gospel, are enabled to put into execution: *That the righteousness of the law,* in all its fundamental branches, *may* with greater ardour of holy zeal *be fulfilled in us, who* answer the engagements of our Christian profession, and, in the tenor of our lives, *walk not after the flesh* to indulge its desires and demands, *but after the Spirit;* that is, who under the influences of the Spirit of God abound in the sentiments and duties of a truly spiritual life. You see therefore, my dear brethren, by the whole series of this discourse, not only how safely you may

SECT. XV.

Rom. VIII. 3.

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after flesh, but after the the Spirit.

4

s *What it was impossible for the law to do,* &c.] It is indeed true in the general, as the pious Professor *Zimmerman* justly observes (in his excellent *Comment. de Emin. Cognit. Christi,* p. 6, 7, and 34,) "that the strength of the *law* is not adequate to that of corrupt nature; and it is by *evangelical* considerations, that we are most effectually animated to subdue sin." But this is to be considered as a consequence of what the *apostle* here asserts concerning the law of Moses, rather than the assertion itself. And indeed whoever considers the awful nature and sanctions of *that law,* must acknowledge, that it was calculated to be a much more efficacious restraint from sin than the unassisted *light of nature,* or than any other dispensation revealing God's *law,* prior to the *gospel.* So that the above-mentioned consequence is very strong.

t Merely by its own principles, sufficiently provide.] By this clause I endeavour to lay in an effectual answer to that objection which might lie against the *apostle's* argument, and our explication of it, from the eminent heights of goodness, attained by some holy men under the *law.* It was not *by the law,* though *under it,* that they obtained them; but by those *evangelical* promises which mingled with the *law,* though they did not make a part of it, but sprang from the *Abrahamic covenant,* which, as the *apostle* elsewhere urges, was unrepealed by the *law;* and this, which the Jews were so ready to forget, (Rom. x. 3,) is the point that he so particularly labours, both in *this epistle,* and that to the Galatians, to inculcate.

u *The likeness of sinful flesh.*] Those writers who imagine that our first parents were, in their original state, cloathed with a visible lustre, which was lost by their transgression, in reference to which it is said, *that they knew they were naked,* naturally explain this clause by that *hypothesis.*

x *For sin.*] That αμαρτια signifies *a sacrifice for sin,* is very apparent, from Heb. x. 6; 2 Cor. v. *ult.* and a vast many other passages. The reader will observe, how very easy this little transposition, on account of what is so plainly a *parenthesis,* makes this passage, which is generally thought so obscure.

SECT. XV.

may cease the observation of the Mosaic law, but how absolutely necessary it is, that you should look beyond that, and consequently beyond any other law, natural or revealed; as ever you expect justification before God, and desire to be animated to serve him in an acceptable manner.

Rom. VIII. 4.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. ADMIRABLE and adorable indeed were the condescensions of 3 the blessed God, *in sending his own Son in the likeness of* our *sinful flesh*, stript of its original glories, *that he might become* an expiatory *Sacrifice for sin*. Let us remember the grand purpose for which he did it; that he might condemn sin in our flesh, that he might enable us to do execution on sin as a condemned malefactor. In his name therefore let us pursue the victory, and rejecting every overture of accommodation, with determined zeal do justice upon it. And may what we have been reading, 1 establish our resolution of walking, *not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, since we are now delivered from the curse of a broken law, 2 and blessed with a dispensation so properly called *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*: a dispensation, by attending to the peculiarities of which, we may be enabled to extend our conquests over sin in the most effectual manner, and to attain heights of virtue and piety to which no legal considerations and motives alone could raise us.

But O, what reason of humiliation is there, that we improve it no better, and that these melancholy strains should so well become *us!* That instead of pressing forward daily to fresh victories, and making new improvements in the Divine life, we should so 23, 24 often complain, and have so much cause to complain, of *a law in our members*, not only *warring against the law of our minds*, but even, in many instances, *bringing us into captivity to the law of sin and death*: so that we Christians should cry out, like those under the Mosaic œconomy, *O wretched men, that we are, who shall* 25 *deliver us!* Let renewed views of *Christ Jesus* animate us to renewed vigour in this warfare; lest when we are delivered from those servile terrors which the legal dispensation under a consci- 8, 11 ousness of guilt might have awakened, *sin*, no longer able to *take* 15 this *occasion from the law*, should appear yet *more exceeding sinful* by taking occasion, in another view, even from the gospel itself; which in many instances it seems to do.

12 Let us remember, that the *law* of God *is holy, just, and good:* 22 *delighting in it* more and more *after our inner-man*, and taking heed

heed, that we do not deceive ourselves by such a passage as this, into a secret, but vain and fatal hope, that because we are convinced of our duty, and feel in our conscience a sense of the evil of sin, we might be said to serve the law of God, while by abandoning ourselves to known acts of wilful transgression, we are in our flesh serving the law of sin. Habitually to allow ourselves in neglecting the good we approve, and committing the evils we condemn, is the readiest way that hell itself can point out for the ruin of immortal souls; in such a case, all that we know, and all that we feel, concerning the obligations of duty, and the excellence of holiness, aggravate, rather than extenuate, our failures; and though the sublime views which eminently good men under the gospel have of religion, may sometimes incline them to adopt such complaints as these, in reference to the unallowed and lamented deficiencies and infirmities of a truly upright and pious life; it remains an eternal truth, which instead of being abrogated under the New Testament, is most expressly confirmed, that *he who doth righteousness, is righteous, and* not he that merely wishes to do it; and *he who committeth sin, is of the devil,* even though he should speak against it like an *apostle,* or an *angel.* SECT. XV. Ver.

It is indeed impossible, exactly to lay the line that separates the boundaries of the kingdom of *Christ* and of *Satan;* nor is it by any means a desirable thing, that we should know the lowest state of weakness and degeneracy into which a Christian may fall, while he continues in the main a Christian. We have great reason to doubt whether we be really Christians ourselves, if for our own sakes we wish to know it. Our calling obliges us to aspire after the most eminent attainments in religion; it obliges us never to rest till we find ourselves *dead indeed unto sin,* and *alive to God through Jesus Christ:* so as to abound in all the vital fruits of righteousness unto his praise and glory. 21, 24

SECT. XVI.

The obligations which the gospel lays upon us to a holy life are farther argued, and especially those arising from the communication of the Spirit of God to believers. Rom. VIII. 5—17.

ROMANS VIII. 5.
FOR they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh;

ROMANS VIII. 5.

I HAVE, in the preceding discourse, urged it again and again, that we who profess ourselves Christians should walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit, as ever we desire to rejoice in the glorious deliverance which the gospel brings; and with the greatest reason: for this is SECT. XVI. Rom. VIII. 5.

SECT. XVI.

Rom. VIII. 5.

indeed the most important distinction in the character of men, and not any form of outward profession, or rite of worship and devotion. *They who are after the flesh*, that is, who remain under the influence of a corrupt and degenerate nature, *do mind the things of the flesh*; they prefer and pursue carnal and animal gratifications: *but they who are after the Spirit*, that is, who know any thing experimentally of that Spirit of life which I mentioned above, (ver. 2,) [*do mind*] and pursue *the things of the Spirit:* their minds are formed to a superior relish of spiritual, intellectual, and sacred pleasures, suited to that nobler and immortal part of their nature.

flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 *Now* as the character of these persons is so widely different, their end will be proportionably so; for *the minding of the flesh*[a], the preferring and pursuing its interests, [*is*] *death;* it is the greatest misery that can be imagined, and that which leads to everlasting death and ruin: *whereas the minding*, preferring and pursuing the interests of *the Spirit* [*is*] *life and peace;* the greatest present good and happiness which

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded, *is* life and peace:

7 leads to life and glory everlasting. And it must needs be so, *because the carnal mind*, as I have described it above, [*is*] in the very essence of it an absolute *enmity to* the blessed *God:* from whom all life and peace and happiness proceed; and consequently it brings us into a state of hostility against him. *For* it is impossible his creatures should be in a state of friendship with him, unless they are in a state of willing subjection to him. Now as for the carnal mind, *it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it* possibly *be* [*so.*] For, however you may suppose any law of God to vary, as to ritual and ceremonial institutions, while the nature of God continues pure and holy, as it must eternally and immutably do; he cannot but require the observation of the grand branches of moral virtue, founded on the unalterable nature and relation of things; he therefore must require us to be spiritually minded, and to prefer the interest of the soul to that

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 of the body. *So that they who are in the flesh*, that is, under the government of a fleshly principle, whatever ceremonial precepts they may observe,

8 So then they that are

[a] *Now the minding*, &c.] It is plain, γαρ must here signify *now* for nothing could be more absurd, than to say, that some *minded* the things of the flesh, *because* it is death to do it.

[b] *The*

are in the flesh, cannot please God.

observe, or whatever orthodox principles of faith they may profess and maintain, yet *cannot* possibly *please God.* He must either abhor and punish them, or dishonour his own law, and contradict his pure, holy, and unchangeable nature.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

9 *But* blessed be God, *you* Christians *are not in the flesh*, in that carnal enslaved state described above, *but in the Spirit*, and under his influence; ye, my brethren, are certainly so, *if* that *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you;* for wherever he dwells, he reigns and makes the soul thoroughly holy. *And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ* thus residing and governing in him, then, whatever he may pretend, *he is none of his:* he is not to be reckoned as a disciple of Christ, and Christ will disown him another day, as having only abused his name, while he wore it.

10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life, because of righteousness.

10 *And* by the way, to animate your hopes and all your graces, remember, that *if Christ* [*be*] thus resident *in you*, by his sanctifying Spirit, though *the body* [*is*] *indeed dead, because of* the first *sin* that ever entered into the world[b], which as I shewed above, has brought on a sentence of universal death; *yet the spirit* [*is*] *life*, and shall after death continue living, active and happy, *because of* that *righteousness* of which our great Head, the second Adam, is the Author, as I have inculcated at large.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you: he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

11 *And* we have this farther joyful hope, that *if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus*, our great Covenant-Head, *from the dead, dwell in you, he that* so powerfully and gloriously *raised up Christ from the dead, will also*, in due time, *quicken your mortal bodies*, though corrupted and consumed in the grave, *by* the agency of *that* great and powerful *Spirit, which* now *dwelleth in you*, and acts to quicken you in the Divine life.

12 Therefore, brethren,

12 *Therefore*, my dear brethren, since it is certain the gratifications of the flesh can do nothing for us like that which will be done for us at the resurrection, and since all present enjoyments are mean and worthless when compared with that; here is a most substantial argument for that

b *The body is dead because of sin*, &c.] Some would render it, *with respect to sin;* but as there is no seeming opposition between *a death with respect to sin*, and *a life with respect to righteousness*, I think the version here retained much preferable; and if this be admitted, it will certainly determine the sense of the next verse quite contrary to Mr. Locke's *unnatural gloss*, which explains, *quickening the mortal body*, by *sanctifying the immortal spirit.*

c *The*

SECT. XVI.

that mortification and sanctity which the gospel requires. And it necessarily follows, that *we are debtors* to the Spirit, which gives us such exalted hopes, and *not unto the flesh, that we should live after* the dictates, desires and appetites of *the flesh*. *For* I must plainly and faithfully tell you, and must repeat and inculcate it upon you, as a matter of infinite importance, that *if you*, though professing Christians, and some of you eminent for so high and distinguishing a profession, (Compare chap. i. 8,) do *live after the flesh*, and mind nothing superior to its interests, *ye shall* assuredly *die*, that is, shall perish by the sentence of an holy God, no less than if you were Jews or heathens. *But if you, through the* influence and assistance of God's holy *Spirit*, and the exercise of those graces which he by regeneration has implanted in your souls, *do mortify* and subdue *the deeds of the body*, those carnal inclinations from whence all criminal indulgencies of the body arise, *ye shall live:* ye shall finally obtain a state of complete felicity, in spite of all that death can do to dissolve these animal bodies: not now to insist on that true rational delight which is only to be found here in such a course, and without which our abode on earth scarce deserves the name of life. Well may it be expected, that in this case you shall live for ever; since hereby your adoption of God, which must intitle you to a blissful immortality, will be approved. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God*, and humbly resign themselves to be guided whithersoever he will, by his sweet and secret influence on the soul, *they are* indeed *the sons* and daughters *of God*, and shall inherit eternal life with their heavenly Father: of which, indeed, if we are obedient to his holy dictates and motions, we already receive the earnest and foretastes. *For ye*, who are real Christians, *have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear*[c], ye are not come under another dispensation like that of Moses, which was much more adapted to strike the mind with terror, and often produces a servile disposition; *but,*

Rom. VIII. 12

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but

thren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

c *The spirit of bondage.*] Both Mr. Locke and Mr. Pierce understand this *of the fear of death*, under which the legal dispensation left the Jews; but I rather understand it of that comparatively *servile spirit* which ran through the whole *Mosaic œconomy*, and which is finely illustrated by *Dr. Evans, in his Sermon on this text. Evan's Christian Temp.* Vol. I.

but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

but, on the contrary, *ye have received the Spirit of adoption*, the confidence of children in approaching to God; *by which* Spirit, whatever our different nations and languages may be, *we* can, with equal joy and freedom, present our addresses to his throne, and *cry* with the overflowings of filial affection to him, and fraternal love to each other, *Abba, Father*[d]. *For* as the communication of the visible and extraordinary gifts of *the Spirit* both to Jews and Gentiles, witnesses that we are, without distinction, in this respect accepted and owned by God as his people; so also he *himself*, by his internal and gracious operations, *beareth witness with* the answer of *our spirits*, when seriously examined and interrogated, and gives us an inward and joyful assurance, *that we are the children of God*, and personally interested in his paternal love. *And* from hence arises a most joyful and triumphant hope; for *if* we are his *children*, *then* we are undoubtedly *heirs* of a glorious and immortal inheritance: we are then *heirs of God*, and shall for ever enjoy him, as our gracious Father, whose presence and love is the very heaven of heaven. *And* we are also *joint-heirs of Christ*, we shall enjoy this happiness as with him, in his sight, and shall be formed to a resemblance of him, as the great foundation of that enjoyment. But then let it ever be remembered, that this is to be taken in connection; it is, *provided that we* are willing, not only to deny ourselves in prohibited carnal gratifications, and to govern our lives, by his precepts, but also to *suffer with* [*him*,] that is, in conformity to him, if called out to it for the honour of God, and for the testimony of a good conscience; *that* so *we may also be glorified together* with him, in that world where he now triumphs, and where all the infamy and pain we endure for his sake, shall be amply repaid with honours and joys everlasting.

Rom. VIII. 15.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

16

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

17

IMPROVE-

[d] *Abba, Father.*] I suppose few of my readers will need to be informed, that the word *abba* signifies *father*, in the Jewish language, that is, the *Syro-Chaldaic*; and the insertion of it here beautifully represents the union of Jewish and Gentile believers in those devotions, which were dictated by a filial spirit.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XVI.

Ver. 17

WELL may we rejoice in privileges like these; well may we be astonished to think, that they should be bestowed on any of the children of men! That any of them should be *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;* the adopted children of an heavenly Father, and marked out by the communications of his Spirit for an inheritance which he hath prepared! That they should be fitted and enabled to approach him with that endearing appellation, 15 *Abba, Father*, in their mouths! O that every one of us may know by experience, which alone can teach us, how sweet it is! and if 14 we would obtain and secure this *witness*, let us see to it, that we be obediently *led by the Spirit of God;* for that Spirit is not where he does not effectually govern; and *if any man have not the Spirit* 9 *of Christ, he is none of Christ's* disciples, nor is he entitled to any of the privileges of his people.

Let the matter therefore be seriously examined: and let it be determined by inquiry, whether we do on the whole *walk after* 1 *the flesh* or *the Spirit*. Let us guard more and more against that 7 *carnal mind which is enmity against God*, and *cannot be subject to his law*, nor leave room for us *to please God*, while it presides and governs in us. Let us often reflect upon that *death* which would 6 be the consequence of our *living after the flesh;* and never conceive of ourselves upon any occasion as persons, who, in consequence of something that has already passed, have found out a way to break the connection here established, and in the nature of things essentially established between a *carnal mind* and *death*. May our spirits be more and more enlivened by that vital union with a Redeemer which may give us a part in the merit of his *righteousness*, and in the *life* it has secured for all true believers; and may the efficacy of his Spirit to raise our souls from a death of sin to a life of holiness, be in us a blessed earnest, that he will complete the work, and at length *quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in us*. When flesh and sense can administer a consolation like this, let us hearken to them: in the mean time, let us remember, let us always remember, how much we are *debtors to the Spirit;* and let us endeavour to act according to these immense obligations.

SECT.

SECT. XVII.

The glorious prospects, which the gospel sets before us, are represented and urged as a further advantage which it gives us for holiness; even that consummate glory, the discovery of which the whole creation, now subject to vanity, seems to wait and call for. The apostle then mentions consolations which are derived from the assistances of the Spirit in prayer, as further illustrating his main design. Rom. VIII. 18—27.

ROMANS VIII. 18.

FOR I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

ROMANS VIII. 18.

SECT. XVII.

Rom. VIII. 18.

IN representing the high privileges of our adoption, I have been observing, that if, in consequence of our fidelity to our Saviour, we should suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together with him: and in this persecuted state in which, as Christians, we now are, I beseech you attentively to enter into this thought, that your hearts may be duly quickened and fortified by it. I have for my own part been obliged, amidst the peculiar hazards of my apostolic office, frequently to weigh, and exactly to examine the matter; *and I find upon* the most deliberate *computation, that the sufferings of the present time*, how extreme soever they may be, [*are*] *not worthy* [*of any account*] at all, not so much as worthy of a mention, *when set against that* great and unalterable *glory that shall* in due time *be revealed to us*; but which at present exceeds even our most elevated conceptions, and can never be fully known, till we see each other wear it, and by consciousness feel it in ourselves.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

19 These, my dear brethren, are the views with which I would animate your minds; and surely no object can give them more noble or more delightful employment. *For* methinks, when I look round upon the blasted and wretched state of this world of ours, it seems that all nature does, as it were, call aloud, in pathetic language, for that blessed change which the gospel was intended to introduce. *The earnest expectation of the* whole *creation*[a], so far as it now lies

a *The earnest expectation of the creation*, &c.] This and the following verses have been generally, and not without reason, accounted as difficult as any part of this *epistle*. The difficulty has perhaps been something increased by rendering *κτισις*, *creation*

SECT. XVII.

lies open to our view, *is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God*; for the happy time
Rom. VIII 19. when he shall appear more openly to avow them, and that reproach and distress shall be rolled away under which they are now disguised and concealed. *For the creation* soon lost
20 its original beauty and felicity; a sad change passed on man and his abode, so that all the visible face of nature *was made subject to vanity* and wretchedness in a variety of forms: and this *not willingly*, not by the personal misbehaviour of those who are now most deeply affected with it, *but by him who subjected* [*it*], that is, by Adam, when he stood at the head of our race, as a public person, and by his transgression brought us into so deplorable a state.
21 Deplorable indeed! but blessed be God not entirely abandoned; since it is still in *hope*, that the salvation so happily begun, shall at length be much more widely extended; *that the creation shall*, at least in ages to come, *be set free from the bondage of corruption*, by which men are now abusing themselves and the inferior creatures; and that they shall even be brought *into the glorious liberty of* which we christians are possessed, in consequence of our being *the sons of God:* as it is certain the creation would be made inconceivably happier than it is, if this blessed dispensation, by which we are introduced into God's family, and taught to do our utmost to diffuse good to all around us, were
22 universally to prevail. In the mean time, such is the state of the whole world, that it seems to call in the most importunate manner *for* this great interposition of Divine power and mercy in its favour; yea, I may say in reference to it

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity: not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now:

we

creation in one clause, and *creature* in another. To explain it as chiefly referring to the brutal, or inanimate creation, is insufferable; since the day of the redemption of our bodies will be attended with the conflagration which will put an end to them. The interpretation, therefore, by which Dr. Whitby and Mr. Grove refer it to the Gentile world, is much preferable to this. But on the whole, I think, it gives a much sublimer and nobler sense to suppose it a bold *prosopopœia* by which, on account of the calamity sin brought and continued on the whole *unevangelized* world, (though few of its inhabitants saw so much of their misery, as actually to desire the remedy,) it is represented as *looking out with eager expectation* (as the word *αποκαραδοκια* exactly signifies,) for such a remedy and relief as the *gospel* brings, by the prevalency of which human nature would be rescued from vanity and corruption, and inferior creatures from tyranny and abuse. Nothing is more common, than to represent a *land* as *mourning* or *rejoicing*, as *calling for rain*, &c. And if this be allowed to be the meaning of these three verses, the gradation in the 23d will be much more intelligible than on any other scheme that I know. See note b next page.

b Birth

we know that the whole creation, ever since the first apostacy of our nature from God, *groaneth together, and travaileth together until now*; it laboureth in strong pangs to bring on this important birth of sons and daughters unto the Most High [b]. *And not only* doth the whole creation seem [*so*] to travail in pangs around us, when we survey those parts of it where the gospel is yet unknown, *but even we* Christians *ourselves who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit*, and thereby have attained no inconsiderable degrees of liberty and deliverance, even we *groan within ourselves* under many remaining imperfections and burdens; while we are yet *waiting* with strong desire *for the* great event, which may, by way of eminence, be called our *adoption* [c], as it shall be the public declaration of it, when our heavenly Father shall produce us before the eyes of the whole world, habited and adorned as becomes his children. You will easily perceive I now refer to *the redemption of our bodies*, their final deliverance from the power of the grave at the general resurrection [d], which shall introduce us to a happiness, incomparably exceeding the freest and most glorious state into which the earth shall ever be brought even by the greatest triumph and prevalency of the gospel.

SECT. XVII.

Rom. VIII. 22.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

23

24 For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen, is not hope

This, I say, we are longing and breathing after, and we shall still be so, while we continue here: *for we are saved by hope*; the firm belief and

24

b Bring on this important birth, &c. It is indeed true, that to be in *pangs like a woman in travail* sometimes only signifies being in great distress, where there is no reference to any expected birth; but it seems to me very probable, that the *apostle* in these *metaphors* here alludes to what he had been saying before, (verses 14—17, 19, 21.) In all which places he describes *Christians* as the *children of God*, and so here expresses the general prevalency of the *gospel*, by the birth of many more, with which nature was pregnant, and of which it longed, as it were, to be delivered: thereby beautifully representing the sad condition of those, who while they have faculties fitting them for standing in such a relation to God, as his children, are lost in darkness and vanity, while ignorant of God and the way of salvation; during which time they were even pained by the excellency of their nature, it having no suitable object to act upon. And this is the well adjusted, but generally unobserved gradation I referred to above, note a; the world seems to wait, and call, and groan, for the spreading of the *gospel*, and those among whom it prevails, are still travailing, as it were, with the hope and desire of a yet more exalted state after the resurrection.

c *The adoption*, &c.] I entirely agree with Mr. Howe, (*Works* Vol. I. p. 680, 681,) that here is an allusion to the *two kinds of adoption* among the Romans; the *first* of which was *private*; the *second*, *public* in the *forum*, when the *adopted* person was solemnly declared and avowed to be the son of the *adopter*. Compare Luke xx. 36.

d Deliverance, &c.] That redemption sometimes signifies deliverance, is very certain. Compare Luke xxi. 2; Eph. i. 14; Heb. xi. 35.

SECT. XVII.

and cheerful view of this complete salvation is our great security, amidst so many evils, temptations, and dangers. *But hope which is seen,* Rom. VIII. 24. that hope which relates merely to objects now visible, *is not* worthy the name of *hope. For what a man sees, how doth he yet hope for?* the more we know of these worldly things, the less shall we amuse ourselves with any high hopes and expectations concerning them. *But since* 25 *we hope for what we see not,* for a happiness far exceeding any thing we have ever seen, or can see, *we patiently wait for it,* and find something in the greatness of the prospect, to repay the tediousness of the most afflicted circumstances, and to excite us to prepare for it by cultivating a suitable temper in all its branches.

hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it.

Such hope doth our holy profession administer 26 to us, for our support amidst all the difficulties of our Christian course; *and* we have *moreover* this important privilege, that *the* Holy *Spirit* of God graciously *lendeth us his helping hand* [e] *under* all *our* burdens and *infirmities;* so that we are not left to sustain them alone: which is of vast moment in many respects, and particularly in the conduct of our devotions; *for* we are surrounded with so much ignorance and prejudice, that in many instances *we do not know what we should pray for as we ought,* because we know not on the whole what may be best for us: *but the Spirit itself manages* these *affairs for us,* guiding our minds to suitable petitions, and exciting in them correspondent affections, and sometimes inspiring us *with* that intense ardour of holy desire which no words can express, but must therefore vent themselves in *unutterable groanings. But* though we are not able to 27 speak these desires, they are not concealed from God: *he who searcheth the* inmost recesses of human *hearts, knoweth what* [is] *the mind of the Spirit* [f]; he reads all the secret agitations of our spirits which answer to the emotions of his; *for he manages affairs for the saints according to the*

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

e *Lendeth us his helping hand.*] I know now how better to render that expressive phrase, συναντιλαμβανεται ημιν, which literally expresses *the action of one who helps another to raise or bear a burden, by taking hold of it on one side, or lifting it or bearing it with him;* and so it seems to intimate the obligation on us to exert our little strength, feeble as it is, in concurrence with this almighty aid.

f *The mind of the Spirit.*] The phrase is here φρονημα του πνευματος, the very same that was used verse 6; and expresses not merely the *meaning,* but the *temper* and *disposition* of the *mind,* as under the influences of the *Divine Spirit,* pursuing and breathing after such blessings as suit its rational and immortal nature.

g *Manages*

[*the*] *gracious* [*will*] and appointment [*of*] *God's*[g]: a circumstance which he cannot recollect without the greatest pleasure, and the most chearful expectation of receiving every suitable blessing in consequence of it, and in answer to these prayers which are presented to God under such influence. SECT. XVII. Rom. VIII. 27.

IMPROVEMENT.

FOR ever adored be the Divine goodness in sending down his *Spirit* on such sinful creatures, *to help our infirmities:* to implant, and to excite graces in our hearts, to be a source of present delight and of eternal happiness. May we feel him helping our infirmities, and improving our joy in the Lord, to such a degree, that all our devotions may be animated sacrifices. Let not the want of expression in that case trouble us; these *unutterable groanings* are sometimes the sweetest music in the ear of God. Ver. 26, 27

Well may such fervent groanings be excited, when we view that great and glorious Object which the gospel proposes to our hope. Let us encounter the *sufferings of the present time*, with a fortitude becoming those that see them so short and so far overbalanced by the immense and boundless prospects which lie beyond them; prospects of unclouded lustre and unmingled felicity. 18

When we consider the state of that part of the world in which Christianity is unknown, or of those among whom it is a mere empty form; when we consider the *vanity* to which that part of God's *creation is subject*, let it move our compassion, and our prayers, that the state of glorious *liberty into which* God has already brought those who by faith in *Christ* are *his children*, may become more universally prevalent; and the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the channel of the seas. 19, 20, 21

O that Divine and omnipotent grace may give a birth to that grand event, in the expectation of which *nature* seems *in pangs;* such a birth, that *nations might be born in a day;* and where the children are born, may it give a more abundant growth and more happy increase.

We have received what the *travailing creation* has not, *the first-fruits* 22

[g] *Manages affairs for the saints*, &c.] I agree with a late *ingenious writer*, several times mentioned before, in rendering εντυγχανει υπερ αγιων, *manages affairs for the saints*, as the office of an intercessor with God is so peculiarly that of Christ, *our Advocate with the Father*, 1 John ii. 1. As for the phrase κατα Θεον, it is capable of many different significations; but I do not think it here signifies the same with παρα τω Θεω, *in the presence of God*, but rather *on the part of God*, that is, by his appointment, or perhaps; as we render it, *according to the will of God*. I have therefore retained our *version*, and included both the senses in the *paraphrase*.

a *All*

sect. xvii. *fruits of the Spirit*, and they must surely excite us to *groan after the redemption of bodies:* yet still with humble submission to the Ver. will of God, waiting his wisely appointed hour for the dissolution, 23 and for the restoration of them. That God, in whose hand these important events are, best knows how long to exercise our faith, whether in this mortal world, or in the intermediate state; nor should any delay be esteemed long by those who have so cheerful an hope of enjoying God for ever.

SECT. XVIII.

The apostle represents other advantages for holiness which the gospel gives us; particularly those which arise from an assurance that all things shall work together for our good; and from the view we have, as true Christians, of an eternal gracious plan which God has laid for our happiness, in pursuance of which he hath already done such great things for us, especially in sending his Son for our redemption; whence his people may be assured, that no accusation shall prevail against them, and no temptation separate them from his love. Rom. VIII. 28, *to the end.*

ROMANS VIII. 28.

sect. xviii. I HAVE taken occasion to hint a many privileges, which, in consequence of participating of the gospel, you enjoy: *and* now I must Rom. VIII. 28. add this to the rest, that though our afflictions may lie heavy upon us, and though our burdens may continue long; yet *we* assuredly *know, that all things* which occur in the course of Divine Providence, either in their present and immediate, or future and more remote consequences, do, and shall *work together for* real and everlasting *good to them that* sincerely and prevalently *love* the blessed *God*[a] *and are* by Divine grace *called*, and formed to this happy principle, *according to* [*his*] gracious and effectual *purpose.*

29 We have this confidence, I say, because God in his eternal counsels designed this, and appointed a proper series of subordinate causes to make way

ROMANS VIII. 28.

AND we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, *to be* conformed

a *All things* which occur in the course of Divine Providence, &c.] It is so plain, from the whole context, that the *apostle* only speaks of providential events, and it is so evident, that the universal expression *all* is sometimes to be taken in a limited sense, that it must argue, I fear, something worse than weakness, to pretend that *sin* is comprehended in the *apostle's* assertion. *Plato's* sentence so nearly parallel to this, is a commentary infinitely preferable to such an explication, "Whether a righteous man be in poverty, sickness, or any other calamity, we must conclude that it will turn to his advantage, either in life or death." See *Plato de Rep. lib.* ix.

b *Whom*

formed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

way for that blessed event in which all is to terminate; establishing a certain connection between the one and the other; a connection, which in the greatest distress is our confidence and our joy. *For whom he foreknew*, as the objects of his peculiarly favourable regards[b], knowing with everlasting complacency his own thoughts of peace towards them, (compare Jer. xxix. 2,) *he did also predestinate* [*to*] stand in a peculiar relation to the great Redeemer, and [*he*] *made* in due time *conformable to the image of* that glorious and blessed Person, even Jesus *his* only-begotten and best-beloved *Son*, who is now exalted high above all heavens. He appointed, I say, such a conformity between him and them, *that he might be*, and appear to be, *the first-born among many brethren:* and might at length see many of his brethren by his means sharing with him in that happiness to which he is now received, and in which he shall for ever shine, distinguished from them in all rays of peculiar glory. To this felicity did the Father of mercy decree to raise a part of our fallen and miserable race; *and those whom he* thus *predestinated he* in due time *hath called*, or will hereafter in their succeeding generations call, by the invitations of the gospel and operations of his Spirit, to repent and believe, that so they might claim the promised blessings, in virtue of that everlasting covenant which they cordially embrace; *and whom he hath* thus *called, he hath*, on their compliance with that call, *justified*[c], freed them from the condemning sentence of his law, and given them a pleadable right to a full acquittal at his bar; *and* those *whom he hath* thus *justified, he hath also glorified*[d], that is, he hath ap-

sect. xviii.

Rom. VII. 29.

30 Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 30

b *Whom he foreknew*, as the objects of his peculiarly favourable regards.] *To know*, sometimes signifies *to favour*, Amos iii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Exod. xxxiii. 12, 17; Psal. i. 6; Jer. x. 14; Rom. xi. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2; Hos. xiii. 5; and they who interpret these verses, as Mr. Locke, and many others do, of God's intending to bring the Gentiles into the church on a footing of equal privilege with the Jews, must certainly take the word in this sense. But the reader will easily perceive, by my *paraphrase*, that I consider them as applicable to *all true Christians*, whether originally of Jewish or Gentile descent; as the privileges themselves relate not to communities, as such, but to individuals.

c *Whom he hath called, he hath justified.*] *Barclay* pleads that this *justification* must include *holiness*, or it is left out of the chain. *Barcl. Apol.* p. 221. But the *apostle* had so plainly declared in the beginning of the *chapter*, that a *freedom from condemnation* was the peculiar privilege of *those who walk after the Spirit;* that it was the less necessary for him here distinctly to mention *sanctification.*

d *Whom he justified he glorified.*] It is plain, that *justification* is here considered as distinct from, and prior to, *glorification;* and

SECT. XVIII.

appointed they should ere long attain to complete glory and happiness, to which, by virtue of their union with him, they may be said even now to arrive. (Eph. iii. 4.)

Rom. VIII. 30.

31 On the whole, *what shall we therefore say to these things*, or conclude upon this review? surely we may courageously defy all our enemies, and say, *If* that *God*, who hath all power in himself, and all the events of time and eternity under his direction, [*be*,] as we have heard, *for us*, [*who*]*can*] presume to [*be*] *against us*, or be able to do us any hurt by the fiercest opposition, while we are guarded by such a Protector?

31 What shall we then say to these things? if God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

32 Yea, I may add, not only what have we to fear, but what have we not to hope and expect, in connection with such views as these? *he that spared not his own*, his proper and only-begotten *Son*, when even his blood and life came into question, *but* willingly *delivered him up* to agony and death, that he might be a Sacrifice *for us all, how shall he not with him freely grant us all* other *things*, subservient to our truest happiness; which may now be regarded as the purchase of his blood? We may reasonably conclude that what is now with-held, would be detrimental, rather than advantageous to us.

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Upon the whole then, we may take courage, and say, *who shall lodge any accusation against the elect of God*[c], against those who love him, and have been, as we before observed, predestinated

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's

and consequently, that there is a sense in which believers may be said to be *justified* now, (as they often are, compare Luke xviii. 14; Acts xiii. 39; Rom. v. 9; 1 Cor. vi. 11,) though it is at the great day, that their complete *justification* will be declared, and there seems generally to be an ultimate reference to that great transaction, in the use of this *forensick term*. (Matt. xii. 37; Rom ii. 13; chap. iii. 30.) To suppose that *Christians* are said *to be glorified* merely in reference *to the Spirit of glory now resting upon them*, (1 Pet. iv. 14,) is limiting the phrase to a sense less sublime and extensive than it generally has, particularly ver. 17, 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Col. i. 27; chap. iii. 4; 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10; to which a multitude of other texts might be added, where *glory* refers to the exaltation and blessedness of the future state.—This is a memorable instance, and there are scores, and perhaps hundreds more, in which things, that shall certainly and speedily be done, are spoken of as done already. Moses gave a remarkable example of this noble language of faith, *in his song*, (Exod. xv. 13, *&c.) on the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red sea;* and the *prophets* and *apostles* have continued it in a variety of triumphant passages, which it will be a great pleasure to the pious reader to observe for himself.

c *Who shall lodge any accusation*, &c.] This ἐγκλήσει plainly signifies.—By *the elect of God* many understand the Gentiles; but as it is certain, the phrase, whatever it imports, is not to be confined to them, and is presently after used of *believing Jews*, (Rom. xi. 5, 7, 28.) it seems highly reasonable, to consider it here, as including them also; especially as their unbelieving brethren might be ready *to lodge the heaviest accusations against them*, as *deserters* and *apostates* from their own *law*, if they acted on the principles the *apostles* had been laying down in the former *chapter*.

f *God*

God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth:

nated and called according to his eternal purpose? [*is it*] *God?* What! *he who* himself *justifieth*[f]*?* as the prophet in his own case expresses it, (Isa. l. 8, 9.) He is ready to answer all objections, and solemnly to pronounce us absolved. *Who* [*is*] *he* then *that condemneth?* [*is it*] the Lord Jesus *Christ*, whom we know to be appointed as the final Judge? What! doth *he* condemn, *who hath died* to expiate our guilt, and rescue us from condemnation? *yea rather*, (which is the most delightful consideration of all,) *who is risen again?* shall he undo the purposes of his death and resurrection! He *who is now* sitting *at the right-hand of God*, where he appears under a quite contrary character, *and is also making intercession for us;* undertaking the management of our affairs, and, far from accusing us, appears ready to answer all accusations brought against us, and to frustrate all the designs of our enemies?

sect. xviii.

Rom. VIII. 33.

34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

34

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Confident therefore in his protection and favour, we defy them all; and say in strains of yet sublimer triumph, *who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* Who or what shall dissolve that union to him, which is our great security, and be able to alienate our hearts from him, who is the Source of such invaluable blessings, and hath displayed such incomparable riches of grace; [*Shall*] the severest *affliction*[g], *or* the most pressing *straits*, *or* the most cruel *persecution*, to the inconveniences and extremities of which we may indeed be exposed in our Christian warfare; *or hunger*, if we be starving in desolate places[h]; *or nakedness*, if it had not so much as sheep-skins or goat-skins to cover it; *or*, in a word, any other *peril*, to which in our different situations we may be exposed, *or* even the drawn *sword* of our blood-thirsty enemies ready to be plunged into our defenceless bosoms? It may indeed

35

36 (As it is written, For

36

f *God who justifieth*, &c.] I here follow the pointing proposed by the learned and ingenious Dr. *Sam. Harris*, (in his *Observations*, p. 54, 55,) which greatly illustrates the spirit of this passage, and shews, how justly that author adds, *that it is remarkably in the grand manner of Demosthenes.*

g *Shall affliction*, &c.] None can imagine that Christ would love a good *Christian* the less for enduring such *extremities* for his sake. The text must therefore be intended to express the *apostle's* confidence, that God's invariable love to his people, illustrated already in so glorious a manner, would engage him to support them under all their trials, by vital communications of Divine strength.

h *Hunger.*] The word λιμος is more extensive than *famine*, and may be applied to personal, as well as public necessity.

SECT. XVIII.

deed cut short the residue of our mortal days; *as it is written*, in words which may justly be applied to us, (Psal. xliv. 22.) "*For thy sake* Rom. VIII. 36. *we are* without remorse *killed all the day long*, *we are accounted as* so many *sheep destined to the slaughter*, and delivered over to it without resistance on our part, or mercy on that of our enemies." *Nevertheless*, while we appear in so weak and helpless a state, *we do in all these things more than conquer*, we triumph in certain and illustrious victory, *through him who hath loved us*, and, having redeemed us to God by his own blood, will secure us amidst all these temptations, and finally shew that our sufferings and death have been precious in his sight, and have made a part in his merciful scheme for our more exalted happiness.

For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

38 Well may I thus boast of the securest and compleatest victory, even amidst the combat; *for I am persuaded, that neither* the fear of *death*, in any imaginable form of terror, *nor* the hope and desire of *life*, in the most agreeable circumstances that can be imagined, *nor* all the efforts of infernal *angels*, *nor of principalities*, *nor* of *powers*[i], however various their rank, however subtile their artifices, however furious and malignant their rage may be, *nor things present*, difficult as they are, *nor things future*, extreme as they may possibly prove, *Nor* the *height* of prosperity, *nor* the *depth* of adversity, *nor any other creature*, above or beneath, in heaven, earth or hell, *shall be able to separate* any of *us*, who are Christians indeed, *from the love of* the Almighty and ever-blessed *God*, *which is* graciously given us *in Christ Jesus our Lord*[k], by a tenure so certain, that it shall never be lost: and being thus secure that nothing shall separate us from that, we assuredly know that nothing can, on the whole, hurt us; and feel a courage which nothing can dismay.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

IMPROVE-

i *Angels, principalities and powers.*] *Elsner*, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 42,) has sufficiently shewn that *good angels* are sometimes called *powers*, to express their being used as instruments of the *Divine power*, (compare Eph. i. 21, chap. i. 10; Col. i. 16, chap. ii. 10,) as likewise that ἀρχαὶ may signify *magistrates*, compare Tit. iii. 1. But as it is certain that *evil angels* are called *principalities and powers*, (Eph. vi. 12. Col. ii. 15,) and as that interpretation of the words best suits the context, (for it is not to be thought that *good angels* would attempt to separate men from Christ's love,) I must adhere to it.

k *Shall separate us*, &c.] Archbishop Tillotson thinks (Vol. I. p. 491,) Paul speaks thus confidently in reference to himself, and the experience he had passed through of so peculiar a nature; but he seems to me to found the argument on considerations common to all *Christians*, ver. 28, and the connection is such, that if these latter clauses are limited to St. Paul, I do not see how the preceding can be extended farther.

IMPROVEMENT.

O BLESSED souls indeed, who having been in the eternal councils of the Divine love *foreknown and predestinated*, are, in consequence thereof, *called and justified*, as the earnest of being 'ere long *glorified!* Who would not desire to see his own title to privileges so inestimable as these? And how shall we know that we have our part in them? how but by securing an evidence, *that we love God?* Then may we be assured that *all things shall work together for our good*, and glory in it that we are the elect of God; to whose *charge therefore nothing shall be alledged*, since *God justifieth*; whom *none shall condemn, since Christ died* to expiate our sins, and is *ascended* into heaven continually *to intercede* for us. In cheerful dependence on his patronage and care, let us bid defiance to all our enemies, and be willing to submit to the greatest extremities, since they shall not be able to *separate us from the love of Christ*, even *though for his sake we should be killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* SECT. XVIII. Ver. 29, 30 28 33 34 35 36

O blessed souls, whom *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor any other creature*, shall be able to divide and cut off from *the love of God!* What then can harm us? what evil can we then suffer? what good can we want? *When God is for us*, and when we are sensible of his love *in giving us his Son*, how can we allow ourselves to suspect his readiness *with him to give us all things* truly reasonable or desirable? All other blessings, when compared with these, will appear unworthy of a mention; and we should have great reason to suspect, that they were not ours, if we did not find a heart superlatively to value them above every thing else. 38, 39

SECT. XIX.

The apostle now finding it necessary to speak more expressly of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, introduces the subject with very tender expressions of his regard to his Jewish brethren: and then shews, that the rejection of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the posterity of Isaac, from the peculiar privileges of God's chosen people, was an incontestable fact, which the Jews could not but grant to have happened, that is, with regard to the descendants of Ishmael and of Esau. Rom. IX. 1—13.

ROMANS IX. 1.

I Say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my con-

ROMANS IX. 1.

THUS, my brethren, I have endeavoured to animate you by leading your meditations to those SECT. XIX. Rom. IX. 1.

SECT. XIX.

Rom. IX. 1.

those inestimable privileges which we receive in virtue of the gospel, which renders us so far superior to all the harships we can endure; and I hope the thought of them will be abundantly sufficient to establish your adherence to it. Faithfulness will also oblige me to add, that as all who embrace and obey this gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles, are accepted of God, so all who reject it, are rejected by him[a]. And lest, while I maintain this important truth, any should imagine that I bear hard upon my dear countrymen the Jews, on account of any personal injury, which I, or my Christian brethren, of whose sufferings I have been speaking, (chap. viii. 35—39,) have received from them, or by their means; I begin this discourse with the most solemn assurance I can give you to the contrary. And herein *I say the truth in Christ*, I speak with that candour and integrity which becomes a Christian, and as in the presence of that blessed Redeemer who searches all hearts. He knows that *I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness* as to the truth of what I say, *in the Holy Ghost*, as under his influence who so thoroughly discerns the soul on which he operates.

conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 With all this solemnity, on so great an occasion, do I declare to you, *that I have great grief, and incessant anguish in my heart*, when I think of what hath happened, and will happen unto them, in consequence of their opposition to the

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 gospel. *For* methinks, if I may be allowed to express myself so, *I could* even *wish that* as Christ subjected himself to the curse, that he might deliver us from it, so *I myself* likewise *were made an anathema after the example of Christ*[b]; like him exposed to all the execrations of

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my

a As all who embrace, &c.] This the *apostle* had intimated all along in the preceding discourse, which is addressed to *Christians*, as *Christians*, without any regard to their having been Jews or Gentiles; nay, he had expressly declared in the 2d and 3d *chapters*, that their having been Gentiles would be no obstruction. And it is certain, the peculiar oppositions and persecutions, which the believing Jews met with from their obstinate country-men, would make encouragements and consolations like those suggested in the eighth *chapter*, as necessary for *them* as for any *Christians* in the world. So very much mistaken have some learned *commentators* been in the peculiar *turn* they have given to that *chapter*, and several passages in those preceding it.

b *Made an anathema after the example of Christ.*] This sense is given by the learned Dr. Waterland, (*Serm.* Vol. I. p. 77, 78,) who urges the manner in which απο is used, 2 Tim. i. 3, απο των προγονων, *after the example of my fore-fathers.* Compare 1 John iii. 16. Next to this I should incline to the interpretation given by Dr *Clarke*, (*Seventeen Serm.* p. 340,) who supposes the *apostle* means, that he could be content that Christ should give him up to such calamities as these, to which the *Jewish people* were doomed for rejecting

my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

of an enraged people, and even to the infamous and accursed death of crucifixion itself, *for the sake of my brethren, and kinsmen, according to the flesh*, that they might thereby be delivered from the guilt they have brought upon their own heads, and become entitled to the forfeited and rejected blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. SECT. XIX. Rom. IX. 3.

4 Who are Israelites: to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises;

So cordial and disinterested a regard have I for my dear nation, *who are Israelites*[c], the seed of Jacob, that eminent patriarch, who as a prince, had power with God, and prevailed; *whose the* spiritual *adoption* [*is*[d]] in consequence of which, as a people, they were called the sons and daughters of the most high God; *and the glory* which in the Shechinah, resided visibly among them on the mercy-seat[e]; *and the covenants* made successively first with Abraham and then with Moses, *and* with the whole Jewish people in him; who were honoured with *the giving of the law*, in such solemn pomp, *and* received with the precepts of that excellent polity, an exact ritual for *the service* [*of God*] in their tabernacles afterwards practised in their temple with unequalled solemnity *and* magnificence; who were also *the* heirs of such peculiar and important *promises* relating not only to their abode in Canaan, under the administration of an equal and miraculous providence, but likewise including and centring in the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, who was to arise among them. 4

5 Whose *are* the fathers,

I cannot but have a respectful and tender regard for a nation thus dignified and distinguished; a nation, *whose* privileges [*are*] handed down to them from so many illustrious ancestors, in a long descent, who were in their respective ages *the* 5

rejecting him; so that if they could all be centered in one person, he could be willing they should unite in him, could he thereby be a means of saving his countrymen. Compare Deut. vii. 26; Josh. vi. 17, chap. vii. 12.—Grotius understands it of a separation from the *church of Christ*, (which is sometimes called by the name Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12; Gal. iii. 27;) or of *excommunication*.—Elsner, (who, agreeable to Dr. Clarke's interpretation, joins απο τ. Χριστ. with ηυχομην,) shews very well, as many other *commentators have done*, how very absurd it would be to suppose he meant, that he could be content to be delivered over to everlasting misery for the good of others.

c *Who are Israelites.*] The apostle with great address, enumerates these privileges of the Jews; both that he might shew how honourably he thought of them and that he might awaken their solicitude not to sacrifice that Divine favour by which they had been so eminently and so long distinguished.

d *The* spiritual *adoption is.*] That is, whom God hath taken into a special covenant with himself, whereby he stands engaged ever to act the part of a God and Father to them, and to own them as his children. Deut. xiv. 1; Jer. xxxi. 9; Ex. iv. 22; Hos. xi. 1.

e Resided on the mercy-seat.] Hence the *ark* was called *the glory*. Psal. lxxviii. 61; 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22, to which some add, Psal. lxiii. 2.

SECT. XIX.

Rom. IX. 5.

the great *fathers* of the world and church; *and from whom*, to crown the whole, *according to the flesh Christ* himself is [*descended*] *who*, though found in fashion like a man, and truly partaker of our nature in all its sinless infirmities, is also possessed of a Divine nature, by virtue of which, he *is above all* our conceptions and praises, above creatures of the highest order, and indeed, *God blessed for ever*[f], the worthy Object of our humblest adoration, as well as unreserved dependence, love and obedience: *Amen*: let his Divine glories be ever proclaimed and confessed! May all the house of Israel know this assuredly, and fall down before him, as in and with the Father of all, their Lord and their God!

thers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6 Yet notwithstanding all these tender prejudices in favour of my own dear countrymen, I cannot defend or excuse their conduct; nor must I conceal the ungrateful truth asserted above, that by rejecting the gospel, they bring upon themselves rejection from God. But to prevent mistakes, let me in the first place observe, that it is *not* to be supposed, I would *by any means* insinuate, *that the word of God hath fallen* ineffectual *to the ground*, even all that glorious system of promises, by which he engaged to bestow protection, favour and happiness upon his people. *For* in order to provide against any such allegation, I must insist upon it, as a very certain and apparent truth, that *all* [*are*] *not* reckoned to be the *Israel* of God, so as to be the heirs of the promises made to his people, *who are* descended *of Israel* by natural generation.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 *Neither because they are the seed of Abraham*, the head of the holy family according to the flesh, *are* [*they all*] *children*, of the promise; *but* you know it is said, (Gen. xxi. 12,) though Ishmael were the son of Abraham long before, "*In Isaac*, then unborn, *shall thy seed be called*: the descendents of Isaac shall be spoken of

7 Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

f *Above all, God blessed for ever.*] How ingenious soever that conjecture may be thought, by which some would read this, ων ο Θεος ο επι παντων to answer to ων οι πατερες, *(whose are the fathers,* and *whose is the Supreme God;)* I think it would be extremely dangerous to follow this reading unsupported as it is by any critical authority of manuscripts, or ancient quotations. Nor can I find any authority for rendering Θεος ευλογητος εις τους αιωνας, *God be blessed for ever.* I must therefore render, and paraphrase and improve this memorable text as a proof of *Christ's proper Deity*, which I think the opposers of that doctrine have never been able, nor will ever be able to answer. Though common sense must teach, what *christians* have always believed, that it is not *with respect to the Father*, but to the created world, that this august title is given to him. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 27, &c.

g Greatly

SECT. XIX.

of as thy seed, by way of eminence, to the exclusion of those who may spring from thee by thine other children." *That is*, on the whole, *not the children of the flesh* alone, nor any of them merely as such, [*are*] *the children of God, but the children of the promise*, in one peculiar line, *are accounted as the seed* of Abraham, and honoured with the adoption: *For this* [*is*] *the word of the promise*, Gen. xviii. 10, 14, "*according to this time*, that is, reckoning the conception of the child from hence, *I will come* [*to thee*] in a way of gracious and merciful interposition, *and Sarah shall have a son*;" which was said; when Hagar had many years been Abraham's wife, and had long since borne a son to him.

Rom. IX. 8.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9 For this *is* the word of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Nor was [*this*] the *only* instance of the kind; *but* in the case of *Rebecca, when she was with child* of twins *by one man*, that is, *our father Isaac: While* [*the children*] *were not yet born, and had done neither good* to merit, *nor evil* to forfeit, the Divine favour, *that the* sovereign *purpose of God, according to* his free *election might stand* stedfast, and appear *not* to be formed in respect *of the works* done by either, *but* according to the mere good pleasure *of him who calleth* things that do not yet exist into being, and disposeth of all according to his own will: *It was said to her*, when consulting the Divine oracle on the unusual commotion she felt in her womb, that two different people should proceed from the birth, then approaching (Gen. xxv. 23,) and *that the elder* of them, that is, the posterity of Esau, *should serve the younger* that is the descendents of Jacob. *As it is* also *written*, (Mal. i. 2, 3.) "*I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau*, that is, I have greatly preferred the former to the latter[g], bestowing many

10 And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac.

11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob

[g] Greatly preferred the former to the latter.] That to love and hate have this sense in *scripture*, is evident. Compare Gen. xxix. 31; Luke xiv. 26; John xii. 25; and the notes there. These words in their connection with the preceding and following, do indeed prove, that God acts with a sovereign and unaccountable freedom in the dispensation of his favours: and do, I think, consequently prove, that it was not upon the foresight of the obedience and piety of Jacob on the one hand, or the profaneness of Esau on the other, that this preference was given; for then the argument taken from their having actually done neither *good* nor *evil*, would be very weak, since, to an omniscient God, that which he certainly foreknew would be, is with regard to his purpose of events to succeed it, as if it already were. Nevertheless it is certain the apostle does not here speak of the eternal state of Jacob and Esau, (whatever some may suppose deducible from what he says,) nor does he indeed so much speak of their persons, as of their posterity; since it is plainly to that posterity that both the prophecies, which he quotes in support

SECT. XIX.

many peculiar privileges and favours upon the posterity of Jacob, which I have denied to that of Esau, whose habitation I have laid waste, for the dragons of the wilderness, while that of his brother flourished in the richest abundance of all things" We see then, to close this branch of the argument, that the exclusion of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the descendants of Isaac, from the special promises of God, is not only a case which may be supposed possible, but a case, which according to the Jewish scriptures themselves, hath actually happened.

Rom. IX. 13. Jacob, have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2 LET that affection which the apostle expresses for the Jews, his countrymen and brethren according to the flesh, and the tender and pathetic representation which he makes of the privileges which they once enjoyed, awaken in our hearts an earnest solicitude, that they may by divine grace be brought back; that they may again be *adopted* into the family from which they have been cut off, again clothed with the *glory* which is departed from 4 them; that, through him who was given for a *covenant* to the people, they may receive the law of life and grace, be formed to that *spiritual service* which it introduces, instead of their pompous *ritual*, and embrace the promises on which the faith and 5 hope of their illustrious fathers was fixed.

3 Let it likewise teach us spiritual compassion for *our kindred*, who are strangers to Christ, and let us be willing to submit to the greatest difficulties, and think nothing too much to be done or borne for their recovery.

Let our souls pay an humble homage to him, who is, in such an incommunicable and sublime sense, the Son of God, as to be 5 himself *over all, God blessed for evermore*. With prostrate reverence let us adore him, as *our Lord, and our God*, and repose that unbounded confidence in him which such an assemblage of Divine perfections will warrant, putting our most hearty *amen* to every ascription of glory, to every anthem of praise, addressed to him.

And

port of this argument refer, Gen. xxv. 23; Mal. i. 3. *His laying waste the heritage of the Edomites for the dragons of the wilderness*, is so different a thing from his appointing the person of Esau to eternal misery by a mere act of sovereignty, without regard to any thing done or to be done by him to deserve it, that I will rather submit to any censure from my fellow-servants, than deal so freely with my Maker, as to conclude the one from the other.

And, to conclude, since we see that many of the children of *Abraham*, and of *Isaac*, failed of any share in the special promises of God, let us learn to depend on no privilege of birth, on no relation to the greatest and best of men. May we seek to be inserted into the family of God, by his adopting love in Christ Jesus, and to maintain the lively exercise of faith; *without which* no child of *Abraham* was ever acceptable to God, and *with which* none of the children of strangers have ever failed of a share in his mercy and favour.

SECT. XIX. 6, 7 10—13

SECT. XX.

The Apostle shews, that the sovereign choice of some individuals to peculiar privileges, to which none had any claim, and the sovereign appointment, from among many criminals, of some to peculiar and exemplary punishments, was perfectly consistent both with reason and scripture. Rom. IX. 14—24.

ROMANS IX. 14.

WHAT shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

ROMANS IX. 14.

SECT. XX. Rom. IX. 14.

I HAVE already shewn you how possible it is that persons descended from Abraham, and even from Isaac, may be cut off from the special promises of God; as the posterity, first of Ishmael, and then of Esau, evidently were. *What therefore shall we say*, to this? [*Is there*] *unrighteousness with God* in the proceedings and distributions of his providence, in this or any other instance to be produced? *God forbid* we should insinuate any thing of that nature. It is, in the highest consistence with justice, matter of the freest choice, to whom such favours shall be granted. *For he saith to Moses*, (Exod. xxxiii. 19,) when intimating a gracious purpose toward Israel, though they had broke his covenant so soon after the first confirmation of it, and by an act of flagrant idolatry had just merited immediate destruction, *I will have mercy on whomsoever I will have mercy, and will compassionate whomsoever I please to compassionate*, so as to dispense acts of pardon according to my own sovereign pleasure.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

15

16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,

16

Jacob and Esau, of whom I was speaking just above, may be farther considered as an illustration of the sovereignty of the Divine dispensations in such cases: the latter of them, after he had foolishly sold his birth-right, was exceedingly desirous of obtaining his father's blessing, and run out eagerly to hunt venison for him,

SECT. XX.

(Gen. xxvii. 5—30;) nevertheless, it was bestowed upon Jacob. [*It is*] *not therefore*, you see, to be referred into the forwardness of *him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but* it is *of God that sheweth mercy*, to one rather than another, on sovereign reasons, which we cannot penetrate, but must always believe to be worthy of himself.

neth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Rom. IX. 16.

17 And *moreover* we may add, that such is the conduct of God in other instances, when of various sinners he appoints one, rather than another, to be a monument of special vengeance. For *the scripture says to Pharaoh*[a], (Exod. ix. 16) "*For this cause have I raised thee up*, to that height of eminence in which thou gloriest[b], *that I may* remarkably *shew forth my power in thee, and that my name*, in consequence of distinguished judgments to be righteously inflicted upon thee, *may be celebrated through all the earth*, in the most distant nations and remotest ages." And accordingly he hardened his heart, that he should not let Israel go; that is, he took measures which he knew would

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 be attended with that effect, and at last brought the extremity of his wrath upon him. *So then* we must, after all our objections, rest the matter here, that the blessed God, as he is uncontroulable, so he is also unaccountable in his dispensations: that in choosing this or that creature to distinguished favours, or appointing this or that sinner to deserved punishment, *he hath mercy on whom he will* have mercy, *and he hardeneth* and destroyeth *whom he will.*

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

But

a *Moreover the scripture says*, &c.] It is plain, that this is no proof of what immediately goes before; I therefore choose to render γαρ by *moreover*, which is consistent with making it introductory to what proves something asserted at some distance, if it come in as a co-ordinate proof. This is so important a remark in the illustration of *scripture*, and clears an attentive reader of so many embarrassments, that I hope I shall be excused repeating it on different occasions. The reader will observe, the *Apostle* does not produce an instance of an innocent person being made an object of Divine displeasure, out of mere sovereignty, but one of the most insolent sinners that the world ever knew.

b *I have raised thee up.*] Some would render it, *I have made thee to stand*, that is, I have supported thee during the former plagues, that I might make thee a more remarkable example of vengeance; but though (as Dr. *Shuckford, Connect.* Vol. II. p. 133, and many others observe,) that agree with ἐξηγειρθης, the word used by the LXX. *in their version of the text in question*, and with the *original* העמדתיך yet it does not answer to the *Greek* word used by St. Paul, ἐξηγειρα. If, as some writers suppose, the Pharaoh here spoken of were an Egyptian king, (I think Apophis,) who made his way to the throne by treason, incest, and murder, the words had a singular weight, in the sense we have here given them. Mr. Taylor explains it of his having been *recovered from the plague of blains*, which was indeed said to have been upon Pharaoh, Exod. ix. 15, 16, and this may possibly be the true sense; but I think the other stronger and nobler.

c *Potter*

SECT. XX.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?

But thou wilt perhaps be ready, while thou readest this declaration, to raise an objection against it, and *say to me*, If "God acts thus, *why doth he then find fault*, and blame his creatures for their obstinacy, when he determines to give what he knows will in fact prove a prevailing occasion to it? *Who hath* ever, in any instance, *resisted*, or who can ever be able to resist *his will?* If he hath determined by such methods to destroy a nation, or a person, who can prevent it, or prevent those evils, which shall, according to his high appointments of Providence, be in fact the means of bringing on that destruction?" Rom. IX. 19.

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?

Nay, but let me rather reply, Who art thou, 20 *O* vain, weak and ignorant *man*, with all thy boasted wisdom and penetration, *who art thou who* thus arrogantly *enterest into a debate with* the all-wise, almighty and all-gracious *God*, and chargest his proceedings as arbitrary and unjust? Surely it becomes us, whenever we treat such a subject, to do it with the humblest reverence, and through the whole to remember the infinite distance between him and us. *Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed* [*it*,] *Why hast thou made me thus?* Let us remember he is our almighty Creator, and not imagine we can ever have any room or right to expostulate with him, or in any circumstance to complain of him.

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Hath not the potter power over [*his*] *clay*[c], as 21 God himself represents the case, (Jer. xviii. 4—6,) *out of the same mass to make one vessel to* uses of *honour, and another to* the basest offices of *dishonour*; and to break and renew it at his pleasure? [*What*] then is it to thee, or what right hast thou to find fault, *if God resolving* at 22 last *to manifest* the terrors of [*his*] *wrath*, and *to make known his* awful and tremendous *power*, in their aggravated destruction, *hath* in the mean time, *endured with much long-suffering* those who shall finally appear to be *the vessels of wrath* which are *fitted to destruction*[d]? Is he to account

22 *What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

to

c *Potter power over* [*his*] *clay.*] It is observable, that Plutarch uses the very same similitude with this before us; and Aristophanes, among other contemptuous expressions, by which he describes the frailty of human creatures, calls them πλασματα πηλου, *vessels of clay.* See *Bos in loc.*

d *Endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath*, &c.] The *apostle* seems here to have had the *impenitent Jews* in his thought, though he did not think it proper expressly to name them. It is certain, they were *vessels of wrath*, and that they were long borne with, under many advantages, which they ungratefully abused.

e *He*

SECT. XX.

Rom. IX. 22.

to thee for punishing them who justly deserve punishment, at what time, and in what manner he pleases, and to ask thy leave to delay or to execute the stroke of his righteous vengeance? *And* [*what if,*] on the other hand, *that he may make known* in the most affecting and endearing manner *the riches of his glory*, and display his compassions *in* those whom he will make *the vessels of mercy*, *he* graciously waits upon them, and [*long endures*] them[e], even [*those*] *whom he hath*, by the power of his own grace, *previously prepared to glory*, that they might in the most honourable manner be at length called to partake of it? *Even us*, *whom he hath* already *called* into the happy number of his people, *not only of the Jews*, *but of the Gentiles* too. Shall he make an apology to thee, O man, that he hath appointed some of our sinful race to such mercy, that he hath exercised much long-suffering towards them, that he hath at length wrought upon them by his effectual grace; or that determining to deal thus mercifully with some of Jacob's race, he hath added to their number others whom he hath taken from Gentile nations? Know thy place, and acquiesce in humble silence. Allow the blessed God to do what he will with his own, and let not thine eye be evil because he is good.

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?

24 Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn from the memorable section which we have now been reading, humbly to adore the *righteousness* and *holiness* of God, in all the most amazing displays of his sovereignty, which we are sure are always consistent with it. Let us own his right to confer on whom he pleaseth, those favours which none of us can pretend to have deserved; and adore his wonderful goodness, in chusing to *exercise mercy* and *compassion* on any of the children of men, yea, on many, who must own themselves in the number of those who had the least claim to it. He hath of his mere goodness given us those privileges, as *Christians*, and as *Pro-*

Ver. 14

15

e *He waits and endures.*] As it is certain, there is an *ellipsis* in these words, and that something must be supplied, it seems most natural to borrow a word or two from the preceding *verse*, to complete the sense. Every attentive reader will, I doubt not, infer for himself the great difference of phrase in which they who are *vessels of wrath*, and they who are *vessels of mercy*, are spoken of: it being said simply of the former, that they were *fitted for destruction*, but of the latter, *that God prepared them for glory*. A distinction of so great importance, that I heartily wish we may ever keep it in view, to guard us against errors, on the right-hand, or on the left. Compare Mat. xxv. 34, 41, and the *note* there.

Protestants, which he hath with-held from most nations under heaven. And if we improve them aright, we have undoubtedly reason to look upon ourselves *as vessels of mercy* whom *he is preparing for* eternal *glory*. Let us adore his distinguishing favour to us, and arrogate nothing to ourselves. It is *neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*, and *worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure*.

SECT. XX.

Ver. 23, 10

Long did his patience wait on us; and let that patience be for ever adored! It shall be glorified even in those that perish: for he is so far from destroying innocent creatures by a mere arbitrary act of power and terror, that he endureth *with much long-suffering*, those who by their own incorrigible wickedness prove *vessels of wrath*, and whom the whole assembled world shall confess *fitted for the destruction* to which they shall finally be consigned. That after long abuse of mercy they are *hardened*, and perhaps after long hardness are at length destroyed: yea that some of the vilest of men are exalted by providence to a station that makes their crimes conspicuous, as those of *Pharaoh*, till at length he *shews forth his power* the more awfully, and maketh his name the more illustrious, by their ruin, is certainly consistent with that justice which the Judge of the whole earth will never violate. 22, 18, 17

But if in tracing subjects of this kind difficulties arise beyond the stretch of our feeble thought, let us remember that we are *men*, and let us not dare to *reply against God*. Retiring into our own ignorance and weakness, as those that are *less than nothing*, and *vanity*, before him, let us dread by any arrogant censure to offend him who has so uncontroulable a power over us. *As clay in the hand of the potter, so are we in the hand of the Lord our God.* Let us acquiesce in the form he has given us, in the rank he has assigned us; and instead of perplexing ourselves about those secrets of his counsels, which it is impossible for us to penetrate, let us endeavour to purify ourselves from whatever would displease him; that so we may, in our respective stations, be *vessels of honour, fit for the use of our Master* now, and intitled to the promise of being acknowledged as his, in that glorious day when he shall *make up his jewels*. 20, 21

SECT.

SECT. XXI.

The Apostle shews, that the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of God's peculiar people, when Israel should be rejected, was so far from being inconsistent with scripture, that it had been actually foretold, both by Hosea and Isaiah. Rom. IX. 25, *to the end.*

ROMANS IX. 25.

SECT. XXI.

Rom. IX. 25.

I HAVE been remonstrating as to the unreasonableness of quarrelling with the Divine dispensations, in distinguishing one creature from another, by his favours; or one sinner from another, by appointing him to peculiar severities of punishment, not exceeding the demerit of his offence: I will now venture, without farther reserve, to say, that in what I have been writing, I had some peculiar reference to God's calling so many of the Gentiles by the grace of his gospel, and his appointing the impenitent Jews to be monuments of wrath. And let me now address myself to the latter, and say, Who gave thee, O Jew, an authority to question and dispute with thy God on this occasion? Yea, is there on the whole any reason for thee, who hast the scripture of the Old Testament in thine hands, and professest such a regard for them, so much as to be surprised at this, when there are so many hints of it in these Divine oracles? *As* particularly *in Hosea*, where *he* hath spoken of calling Israel Loammi, as disowning them for their wickedness, and *hath also said*, (Hos. i. 10,) "*I will call them my people, who were not my people* before, *and her Beloved, which was* 26 *not* for a long time *beloved*[a]; *And it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was* most expressly *said to them, Ye [are] not my people, there shall they be called,* not only the people,

ROMANS IX. 25.

AS he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her Beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be

a *Call them my people, which were not my people.*] It seems very evident from the connection of those words in Hosea, that they refer to God's purpose of restoring the Jews to the privileges of his people, after they had been a while rejected of him. But it is obvious, they might with great propriety be accommodated to the calling of the Gentiles; and indeed that great event might with some probability be inferred, partly from the temporary rejection of the Jews, of which this text spake, (for it was not to be imagined God would have no people in the world;) and partly, as it was in the nature of things more probable that he should call the *heathen*, than that he should restore the Jews, when he had cast them off for such ingratitude, as rendered them less worthy of his favour than the most idolatrous nations. Compare *Jefferies True Grounds*, p. 149.

b *Cutting*

be called, The children of the living God.

people, but *the sons* and daughters *of the living God*, by special adoption and favour." As he is the living God, he can easily bring it into execution, and the more you reflect on the whole tenor of his word, the more you will be sensible of the propriety with which I apply this passage, whatever its original sense might be to the purpose in view. I must *also* observe, that *Isaiah crieth concerning Israel* with great earnestness and affection, (Isa. x. 22, 23,) "*Though the* whole *number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea*, [*yet*] only *a remnant shall be saved*, and the bulk of the people cut off. *For the Lord is finishing and cutting short his account in righteousness; for the Lord will make a short account upon the earth*[b]: there shall be such a consumption of them, that when accounts come to be balanced, there will be found but a very small overplus." *As* the same *Isaiah hath formerly said* in a passage very much resembling that which I just now referred to, (Isa. i. 9,) "*Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been made like to Gomorrah.*" There was then you see but a little remnant, which preserved the whole people from being utterly consumed; so that it is no unexampled thing that the main body of the Jewish nation should fall into a revolt from God, and become the object of his displeasure to the most dreadful degree. *What shall we then say*, in the conclusion of the whole argument? Surely this; *that the Gentiles, who pursued not after righteousness*, who had a little while ago no knowledge or expectation of it, and no desire after it, *have* now, to their own unspeakable surprise, and that of the whole world, *attained to righteousness*, that is, to the profession of a religion whereby they may be justified and saved; *even the righteousness, which is by faith* in the gospel, and consists in humbly committing the soul to Christ in the way that he hath appointed. *But* while *Israel* was *pursuing the law of righteousness*, and expecting to obtain righteousness by legal observances, it *hath not attained to* that, which is indeed most properly to be called *the law of righteousness*, that is, to the blessings of that

SECT. XXI.

Rom. IX. 26.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

27

28 For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

28

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabbaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

29

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith:

30

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

31

b *Cutting short his account in righteousness.*] Mr. Locke would translate it, *for the Lord, finishing or cutting short his work in righteousness, shall make a short or small remnant in the earth.* This is undoubtedly the *sense*, but the *version* is not exact.

SECT. XXI.

that dispensation by which alone righteousness and life is to be secured. And *wherefore* did they miss those blessings? Because they never heard of the way to Divine favour and acceptance? Nay; but *because* [*they did*] *not* [*pursue it*] *by faith*, whereby alone in this fallen state of our nature it is to be obtained; *but* merely, *as* if it was to be gained *by the works of the law*. *For they* in fact *stumbled* and fell *at* 33 *that stone of offence* which lay in their way. *As it is written* in these ever-memorable words, (Isa. viii. 14; chap. xxviii. 16,) "*Behold, I lay in Zion*, that is, I exhibit in my church, what, though so well fitted to be a foundation of their happiness, shall in fact prove *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, that is, an occasion of sin and ruin to many, through their own prejudice and perverseness: *and every one who believeth in him shall not be ashamed*, shall not be brought under a necessity of seeking his refuge elsewhere, in helpless and hasty confusion, to which all they who slight him shall at last be reduced."

Rom. IX. 32.

32 Wherefore? Because *they sought it not* by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.

IMPROVEMENT.

How can we sinners of the *Gentiles* ever sufficiently acknowledge the goodness of God to us, in calling us to that full participation of gospel-blessings which we enjoy! That in our Ver. native lands, where the name of the true God was so long un- 26 known, we should have the honour of being *called his children!* O that we may indeed be so, not only by an external profession, 28 but by regenerating grace! May we be of that *remnant*, that *little remnant*, which shall *be saved*, when numbers countless *as the sand of the sea*, which had only the name of God's Israel, shall perish, even in the day when *his work shall be cut short in righteousness!*

29 Blessed be God that there is a *seed remaining*. It is the preservation of the people among which it is found, and had it not been found among us, we had probably long since been made a seat of desolation. May it increase in the rising age, that the pledges of our continued peace and prosperity may be more assured, till our *peace be like a river*, and our *salvation like the waves of the sea*.

It will be so, if we be awakened seriously to enquire how we may be *justified before God*, and seek that invaluable blessing in the

the way here pointed out; *if we seek it, not as by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ,* as *the Lord our righteousness.* He hath, in this respect, been to many *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.* May Divine grace teach us the necessity of building upon him, of resting upon him the whole stress of our eternal hopes. Then shall they not sink into disappointment and ruin; then shall we *not flee away ashamed* in that awful day, when the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters of that final deluge of Divine wrath *shall overflow every hiding-place,* but that which God hath prepared for us in his own Son.

SECT. XXI. Ver. 31, 32, 33

SECT. XXII.

The apostle shews, that God hath offered pardon and salvation on the same equitable, gracious, and easy terms toall; though Israel, by a bigotted attachment to their own law, rejected it. Rom. X. 1—13.

ROMANS X. 1.

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

ROMANS X. 1.

SECT. XXII. Com. X. 1.

YOU see, *my brethren,* to what this discourse of mine tends, in which I have been representing faith in Christ, as the only method to prevent our shame and ruin, without the exception of any, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should reject him. I know how unkind and unjust an interpretation may be put on such an assertion, though thus supported by the sacred oracles themselves; and therefore I think it proper to renew the assurances I before gave, that *the* most *affectionate desire of my heart,* in the accomplishment of which I should find the greatest complacency, *and* [*my*] *supplication* which I am with daily importunity repeating *before God concerning Israel, is for its* present and eternal *salvation* and happiness; which I wish as sincerely as my own. *For I* am ready to *testify,* from what I well know *of them* by my own observation and experience; *that they have a* very ardent *zeal for God; but* I lament that it is a zeal *not* regulated *according to knowledge,* or directed into a right channel, in consequence of which it leads them into the most fatal mistakes and excesses, *For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God,* of the purity of his nature, the extent of his law, and the method which in consequence thereof he hath established for the justification of a sinner; *and seeking* with great diligence *to establish* and shoar up,

2 For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves

SECT. XXII.

as it were, by the most insufficient props, the ruinous edifice of *their own righteousness*, by the observation of the precepts or expiations of their law [a], *have not submitted* with due humility *to the righteousness of God* exhibited in his Son, nor placed their own attempts of obedience in a due subordination to that.

themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Rom. X. 3.

4 This is the most fatal error that can be imagined; *for* how insensible soever Israel in general may be of it, it is on the whole most certain that *Christ* [*is*] *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth* [b], that is, it is the great scope and design of the law to bring men to believe in Christ for righteousness and life, and its ceremonial and moral precepts and constitutions most harmoniously center in this. *For Moses* most exactly *describeth the* only way of *righteousness which is* attainable *by the law*, [*when he saith*] again and again, (Lev. xviii. 5. compared with Deut. xxvii. 26.) *the man who doth them shall live* in and *by them* [c], that is, the man who perfectly observes these precepts in every particular, and in every punctilio, he, and he alone, if such a person there be, may claim life and salvation by them. Now this is a way of justification, which, when the law has once been broken, becomes absolutely impossible to the transgressor. *But the righteousness which is by faith, speaketh* a very different language, and may be considered as expressing itself *thus*, (if I may be allowed to borrow the words of the great Jewish legislator, when representing the plainness and perspicuity of his law;

4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into

a Observations of the precepts or expiations of their law.] Many writers, and especially the late Dr. Sherlock, in his book *of the knowledge of Christ*, have been much mistaken in the representation they have made of the Pharisaical righteousness, as if it consisted merely in substituting *ceremonial observances*, instead of *moral duties*. The Pharisees certainly inculcated the *external duties of morality*, how much soever they might themselves fail in observing them, or rest merely in outward acts; but they trusted in *legal expiations* to procure the pardon of those evils which might happen; and the composition of these, if I may be allowed the expression, constituted the righteousness which they went about στῆσαι, *to establish, or prop up*, decrepit as it was.

b *The end of the law.*] The *scope* of it, as Elsner shews on this place, that τέλος signifies; he paraphrases the words, *no one can fulfil the law, till he believe in* Christ. But that, how true soever, (compare chap. viii. 2—4.) seems not the chief view of the apostle here.

c *The man that doth them, shall live by them.*] The *Sinai covenant* made no express provision for the pardon of any sin deliberately and wickedly committed against it; and so was indeed a covenant of works; though the dispensation of Moses contained some further intimation of the covenant of grace, which was made with Abraham, and was quite a distinct thing from the law. And the apostle builds so much on these thoughts here, and elsewhere, that it will be of importance to render them familiar to the mind, and to trace the evidence and illustration of them in the Mosaic writings.

to heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above;*)

law; Deut. xxx. 11—14;) "*Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, that is,* as I may in this view accommodate the passage, *to conduct Christ down with him* [*from thence*] to teach and instruct us, or to atone for our offences; *or, Who shall descend into the deep* abyss, *that is, to bring Christ again from* his abode *among the dead*, in the bowels of the earth." No; blessed be God, Christ hath already descended from heaven to bring down the gospel, and he hath in a triumphant manner arisen from the dead to set an everlasting seal to its Divine authority; so that there is no more room to puzzle ourselves about difficulties, or to wish for a power of doing what to human skill or strength is impossible. *But what saith he* afterwards? even these words, so remarkably applicable to the subject before us; "*The word is nigh to thee,* [*even*] *in thy mouth and in thine heart;* easy to be understood, easy to be remembered; and if thine heart be rightly disposed, easy to be practised too." And *that is* eminently the case with relation to *the word of* Christian *faith which we preach: For* God hath given a very plain and intelligible revelation in his gospel; and the substance of it is this, That *if thou* dost courageously *confess with thy mouth*, that *Jesus* is *the Lord, and* at the same time *believe in thy heart*, with a vital and influential faith, *that God hath raised him from the dead*, in proof of his Divine mission; *thou shalt* assuredly *be saved*, whoever thou art, and how heinous and aggravated soever thy past sins may have been. *For* it is *with the heart* that a *man believeth to righteousness*, or so as to obtain justification, nor can any thing but a cordial assent secure that; *and with the mouth confession is made to salvation*, and that public profession of Christianity is maintained, without which a secret conviction of its truth would only condemn. Let therefore the heart and the tongue do their respective parts on this occasion, and your salvation and happiness will be secure; though your obedience to the law of God may have been very defective, and you could have no claim to reward, or forgiveness from thence. *For the scripture* in reference to Christ, as in the forecited text, (Isa. xxviii. 16.) *saith*, "*Every one that believeth in him shall not be* in danger of being *ashamed*,

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

Rom. X. 7.

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach,

8

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

9

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

10

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth

11

SECT. XXII.

ashamed, and put to confusion, in any imaginable circumstance:" Every one without distinction, *for*, you see, *there is no difference between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord of all*, the Creator, Governor, Preserver, and Benefactor of the whole human species, *displays his riches*, and magnifies his bounty, *to all that call upon him*, imparting to them all the same blessings of his providence and grace. *For whosoever shall invoke the name of the Lord shall be saved* [d], as the prophet Joel testifies, (Joel ii. 32,) when he had been speaking of those great events which have in part been so wonderfully accomplished in the effusion of the Spirit, and shall be farther fulfilled in those scenes of Providence which are shortly to open on the Jewish nation.

Rom. X. 12.

13

lieveth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET our hearts, after the example of St. Paul here before us, be overflowing with love and compassion to our brethren; and let us be earnestly interceding with God for their salvation. Where we see *a zeal for God*, let us pay all due regard to it, and com- 2 passionate that *ignorance* which may sometimes be mingled with it; especially if it affect so important an article as that of our becom- 3 ing righteous before God by a better righteousness than our own. Let us pray that God would teach us, and would enable us, according to our respective situations, in a proper manner to teach others, that Christ is indeed the end of the law, of all the laws 4 which God ever gave to fallen man, for righteousness; all were intended to convince men of their need of coming to him, that righteousness and life may be obtained.

Great reason have we to adore the Divine goodness, and to congratulate ourselves, and one another, upon our great happiness in this respect, that God hath given us a revelation, so obvious and intelligible in all the grand points of it. We have indeed no necessity, no temptation to say, *Who shall go up into heaven? or,* 6, 7 *Who shall descend into the deep?* or, Who, like the illustrious, but bewildered, sages of antiquity, shall cross the seas, to bring that knowledge from distant countries, which is wanting in our own? The *word is nigh to us*: It is indeed *in our mouth*: O that it may be *in our heart* too. We know a descending, a risen Redeemer. He still visits us in his gospel, still preaches in our assemblies

d *Invoke the name of the Lord*, &c.] Bishop Pearson argues at large from hence, that if Christ be not here called Jehovah, the apostle's argument is quite inconclusive. *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 149.

assemblies, and stretches out a gentle and compassionate hand to lead us in the way to happiness. May our profession of faith in him be cordial; and then it will be open and courageous, whatever sacrifices we may be called to make. *Believing on him, we shall not be ashamed; calling on his name, we shall be saved;* though we can meet with nothing but despair from a dispensation, that saith, *The man who* perfectly *doth* these precepts, *shall live by them.* SECT. XXII. Ver. 9, 10 5

SECT. XXIII.

The Apostle pursues the view given in the last section, and shews, that the gospel had been diffused widely through the world; though according to other prophecies, which he here mentions from Moses, and Isaiah, the Jews had rejected it, while the Gentiles embraced it. Rom. X. 14, *to the end.*

ROMANS X. 14.

HOW then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

ROMANS X. 14.

FROM the promise of salvation to them that shall call on the name of the Lord, I have just been inferring, (ver. 12, 13,) that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, as to the possibility of obtaining salvation from God. And from hence, we may farther infer what is very sufficient to justify me and my brethren, in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, though we are the objects of so much reproach and persecution on that account. Let us *therefore* attend to the inference. For *how shall they call on him on whom they have not believed,* as worthy to be invoked with Divine honours and adoration? *and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear* of him *without a preacher* to carry these important tidings which the light of nature could never be able to discover? *And,* as for the ministers of the gospel, *how should they preach except they be sent* expressly for that purpose? For, as we were originally Jews, our own prejudices on this head were so strong, that we should never have thought of carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, if God had not particularly charged us to do it. But blessed be God, that the charge has been given, and the embassy sent; and most welcome should it be to all that receive it, *as it is written* and described in that lively prophecy, SECT. XXIII. Rom. X. 14. 15

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful

sect. xxiii.

cy [a], (Isa. lii. 7, 8,) "*O how beautiful are the feet*, the very footsteps, *of those who bring the good tidings of peace, who bring the good tidings of* those various *good things* which God hath now been pleased to bestow on his church. It is pleasant to see and hear the messengers, pleasant to view the very tract of ground over which they have passed, on the mountains which surround Jerusalem [b]."

Rom. X. 15.

ful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 *But* alas, *all have not obeyed the gospel*, glorious as its tidings are, nor given it that cordial reception which its happy contents might well have demanded. And they who are well acquainted with the oracles of the Old Testament, and study them impartially, will not be surprised at it. *For Isaiah saith*, in that very context, which contains so many illustrious testimonies to the cause in which we are engaged, (Isa. liii. 1,) "*Lord, who hath believed our report*, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed,

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 and made bare?" *Faith indeed* [*cometh*] *by hearing, and hearing* in the case now before us *by the word*, the express command *of God*, to make the declaration [c]. It is therefore our duty to deliver the message, wheresoever we come, whether to Jews or Gentiles, in humble hope, that some will believe; though we have so much reason to fear that many will reject it.

17 So then, faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 This is our duty, *but* a duty which we cannot perform without some discouragements; yet *I* may confidently *say*, it hath in the main been practised; and I may appeal to what you at Rome knew of the matter, in consequence of your

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went

a In that lively prophecy.] Most commentators think, that the liid. *chapter of* Isaiah is to be explained as a prophecy of the return of the Jews from Babylon, and that the text here quoted refers to the joyful welcome that should be given to the messengers who brought the first tidings of Cyrus' decree for their dismission. And if it were so, the *apostle* might very justly infer from thence the superior joy with which the messengers of the gospel should be received. But I think, a great deal may be said to shew it probable, that the context in question has in its original sense a farther reference. Compare Isa. li. 4—6. But not judging it necessary, in the *paraphrase*, to build upon it as an argument, I shall not by any means discuss the matter here

b The very footsteps.] *L'Enfant* thinks the *feet* are put for the *arrival*. Compare Gen. xxv. 30, *in the original*. But I think the turn given in the *paraphrase*, illustrates it much better. Bos observes, that in *Sophocles*, the *hands* and *feet* of those who come upon a kind design, are represented as beautiful to those who received benefit by their *arrival*.

c *Faith indeed* [*cometh*.] Mr. *L'Enfant* would transpose the 16th and 17th *verses*; and it is certain, as any one may easily perceive, that the connection of all from the 15th to the 18th, would in that view be clearer; but as no *copies* warrant it, I think it is by no means to be presumed upon. I have therefore translated αρα, which is often a sort of an *expletive*, by the word *indeed*, which throws *this verse* into some kind of connection with the *next*, and it referred to αλλα there, will I hope be thought agreeable enough to the *Greek Idiom*.

went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

your correspondence with all parts of the empire. *Have they not heard* of the gospel all abroad, so that I may take up the words of David, (Psal. xix. 4,) when describing the course of the celestial luminaries, and apply them to the zeal, and in some measure to the success, with which the missionaries of this holy religion have exerted themselves, assisted by the blessed Spirit of God, and animated by the hope of that glorious immortality to which they have taught others to aspire. Of them may I say, that "*verily their voice is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world:*" many distant nations have already heard these glad tidings which God will at length render universal. (Col. i. 6, 23.)

SECT. xxiii.

Rom. X. 18.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy *by them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you.

But I may farther *say, Hath not Israel known* or had an opportunity not only of knowing that the gospel should be preached, but that it should be carried to the Gentiles too; *For first, Moses saith*, in that celebrated song of his, which the children in all generations were to learn, (Deut. xxxii. 21,) "*I will raise your jealousy by* [*those who were*] *not a nation*, [*and*] *your anger with a foolish people;*" which may well be understood as ultimately referring to this great scheme. 19

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

And Isaiah hath the boldness to say, in a context, where so many things evidently refer to the gospel, Isa. lxv. 1, 2,) "*I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that inquired not for me*, nor discovered any concern to be informed of my nature, or my will;" *Whereas*, invidious as he knew it would be to a nation so impatient of rebuke, *with relation to Israel he saith*, in the very next verse, "*All the day long have I stretched out mine hands*, in the most importunate and affectionate addresses, *to a disobedient and gainsaying people*, who are continually objecting and cavilling; whom no persuasion can win to regard their own happiness, so as to be willing to admit the evidence of truth, and the counsels of wisdom." It appears then on the whole, that since the prophets so plainly foretold that the Gentiles should be called and the Jews rejected, it is no way unbecoming my character, as a messenger from God, and a friend to the Jewish nation, to assert the same, and to act upon it. 20

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. 21

IMPROVE-

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XXIII. BLESSED be God for the *preaching* of the gospel, so absolutely necessary to that *faith* without which we can have no well-grounded hope of salvation. Blessed be God therefore for the *mission* of his ministers, and for his abundant goodness, in sending them to us sinners of the *Gentiles*. Let us give them a respectful and attentive hearing, and say, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that preach salvation, that publish peace!* And let us take great care, that we do not only speak respectfully of their doctrine, but that we comply with the purposes of their embassy.

Ver. 14, 15

It is matter of continual joy to reflect, not only that God hath afforded to all men such means of attaining Divine knowledge, by the intimations of it which he hath given in the constitutions of the *heavenly bodies*, and in the whole frame of visible nature; but also, that he hath sent the express messages of grace to so many millions, in the extensive publication of his gospel. Let us rejoice in the spread it hath already had, and let us earnestly and daily pray, that the voice of those Divine messengers, that proclaim it, may *go forth unto all the earth, and their words reach in a* literal sense *to* the remotest *ends of* our habitable *world*. Let us pray, that wherever the word of God hath a *free course*, it may be more abundantly *glorified*; and that its ministers may not have so much reason to say, *Who hath believed our report?* and to complain of *stretching out their hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people*. Exert, O Lord God, thine almighty arm, make it bare in the sight of all the nations. Shed abroad thy saving influences on the hearts of multitudes, that they may believe, and turn unto the Lord! May the great Saviour of his *Israel be found of those that seek him not*, and by the surprising condescensions of his grace, may be manifest himself to those thot do not inquire after him. And may his ancient people not only be *provoked to anger*, but awakened to emulation too; and put in their claim for those blessings which God has by his Son vouchsafed to offer to all the *Gentiles*.

Ver. 16, 21

Ver. 18

Ver. 19

Ver. 20

SECT. XXIV.

The Apostle shews, that though the rejection of Israel be, for the present, general, according to their own prophecies, and attended with astonishing blindness and obstinacy, yet it is not total; there being still a number of happy believers among them. Rom. XI. 1—10.

SECT. XXIV. Rom. XI. 1.

ROMANS XI. 1.

WE have seen, my brethren, how the perverseness of the Jews, and the calling of the

ROMANS XI. 1.

I SAY then, Hath God cast away his People? God forbid. For

SECT. XXIV.

Rom. XI. 1.

For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

the Gentiles, hath been foretold; but *do I say then, that God hath* entirely *rejected his* whole *people*, so as to have mercy on none of them? *God forbid!* I should then pronounce a sentence of reprobation upon myself; *for I also am an Israelite*, as it is well known; I am *of the seed of Abraham*, and can trace my genealogy, and shew particularly, that I am [*of*] *the tribe of Benjamin.*

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

No, blessed be his name, *God hath not rejected* those of *his people whom he foreknew*; but hath still, as in the most degenerate ages, a seed, whom *he* hath chosen to faith and salvation. *Know you not what the scripture saith* to this purpose, *in* the story of *Elijah?* (Compare 1 Kings xix. 14,) *when he pleads with God against Israel, saying*, "*Lord,*

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

they have cruelly *slain* all *thy* faithful *prophets, and they have digged up* the very foundations of *thine altars*[a]; *and I am left alone*, after the slaughter of all thine other servants; *and they seek my life* too, and send murderers in pursuit of me from place to place, that there may not be one worshipper of Jehovah left in their whole land."

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the *image of* Baal.

But recollect, *what says the Divine oracle to him*, in answer to this doleful complaint? "*I have reserved unto myself*, by my grace and Providence, no less than *seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee before* the image of *Baal*, nor complied with any of these idolatrous rites which are established by these iniquitous laws."

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

And so also in the present time, bad as this generation of Israelites is, and sure they were never worse, yet *there is a remnant*, who continues faithful to God, *according to the* free *election of* his *grace*, whereby God hath reserved them to himself, and made them to differ from others[b].

6 And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works:

And by the way, I cannot forbear observing and intreating you to reflect, that *if it be*, as I have said, according to the election *of grace*, *then*

a *Digged up thine altars.*] It seems from hence, that, though according to the *law* there was only one *altar for sacrifice*, and that in the place where God had fixed his peculiar residence; yet, by some special dispensation, pious persons in the *ten tribes* built *altars* elsewhere. It is well known, at least, that Samuel, and Elijah had done it, and perhaps, they were either kept up, or others raised on the same spots of ground.

b *The election of grace.*] Some explain this of *their having chosen grace*, that is, the gospel; but that *turn* is very unnatural, and neither suits the *phrase* nor the *connection* with the former *clause*, or with the next *verse*, in which the *apostle* comments on his own words.

c *Else*

SECT. XXIV.

then [*it is*] *no more*, as some have maintained, *of works*, whether of the Mosaic, or any other law; *else grace is no longer grace*[c], if the glory of our acceptance with God is not on the whole to be ascribed to that. *But* on the other side, *if* [*it be*] *of works, then it is no more of grace; else work is no longer work.* There is something so absolutely inconsistent between being saved by grace, and by works, that if you lay down either, you do of necessity exclude the other from being the cause of it.

Rom. XI. 6.

works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

7 *But*, to return from this short digression, *what then* do we conclude? What, but this, that *Israel hath not obtained that* justification and righteousness *which it has sought*, nor retained these particular privileges of the church of God which they pretend entirely to engross: *but the election*, the chosen remnant, *hath obtained it*, having been by Divine grace engaged to embrace the gospel; *whereas the rest were blinded* by their own fatal prejudices, to which God hath, 8 in righteous judgment, given them up. *According as it is written*, (Isa. xxix. 10. Compare Deut. xxix. 4. and Isa. vi. 10,) *God hath given them a spirit of slumber; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.* He threatens, you see, to punish their perverseness, when it should come to a certain degree, by abandoning them to increasing stupidity and obstinacy, and he hath done it even *unto this day:* for their blindness continues, notwithstanding all the extraordinary things which have been done, even in our own age of wonders, for 9 their conviction. *And* this is agreeable to what *David hath said*, in that prophetical imprecation which is applicable to them, as well as to Judas, (Psal. lxix. 22, 23; compare Acts i. 20,) *Let* all the blessings of *their* most plentiful *table become a snare* to them, *and* that which should, according to its original use and intention, have been

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded:

8 According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a

c *Else grace is no longer grace*, &c.] Some interpret this, "The *gospel* would not deserve the name of *grace*, if the observation of the *Mosaic law* were to be taken in as a part of the terms of our acceptance with God." But this would have been a strange position. Who, that in any degree knew the terrors of God's anger, would not most gladly have accepted of the full pardon the *gospel* offers, on much more rigorous terms than obedience to the *Mosaic ritual*. The meaning rather seems to be, "what is given to works is the payment of a debt, whereas the notion of *grace* implies an unmerited favour; so that the same benefit cannot, at the same time, be derived from both." This seems to be a reflection on the riches of *Divine grace*, which the *apostle* makes by the way, and which well agrees with the fulness of his heart on this subject.

a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them.

been for their welfare, *a trap.* Thus the gospel, which should have been the means of their salvation, is now become an instrument of ruin and destruction to them, *and an occasion of stumbling* in the most fatal manner. *And* it must be acknowledged to be *a* just *recompense* for their wickedness; that the best of blessings should thus be turned into a curse *to them* that so ungratefully rejected and despised it. And in them the following words are also fulfilled, *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and keep their back continually bent down,* under a perpetual weight of sorrows, which they may not be able to support, and which may be a just punishment upon them for having rejected so easy a yoke. (Compare Lev. xxvi. 13.)

SECT. XXIV.

Rom. XI. 9.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

10

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from the *answer of God to Elijah,* when he thought himself *left alone,* and knew nothing of the *seven thousand* which God had *reserved;* to encourage ourselves in a secret hope, that there may be much more goodness in the world than we are particularly aware of. The numbers of those that constitute the invisible church, are unknown to us, but they are known to God. They are all registered in the book of his remembrance, as they are all reserved unto himself by his grace; nor shall *his people whom he hath foreknown be cast away.* May we be of that blessed number; and may the degeneracy, which we see so prevalent around us, animate us to a holy zeal, to hold fast our own integrity: yea, to seize the occasion of approving it in a more acceptable manner, from a circumstance, in every other view, greatly to be lamented.

Ver. 3, 4

3

Let us often reflect upon this great and important truth so frequently inculcated upon us in the word of God, that it is to his *grace,* and not to any *works of our own,* that we are to ascribe our acceptance with him. And let the ministers of *Christ* be ready, after the example of the *apostle,* sometimes to turn, as it were, out of the way, to dwell a little on a thought, at once so humbling, and so reviving.

6

We see the miserable circumstances of God's ancient *Israel,* given up to a *spirit of slumber, to blind eyes,* and *to deaf ears.* O let us take heed, that we do not imitate their obstinacy and folly; lest God make our own wickedness our destruction; lest he *send a curse upon us, and curse our blessings, so that our table should become a snare to us,* our temporal enjoyments, or our spi-

7, 8

9

SECT. XXIV.

ritual privileges. Lord, let us often say, *Give us any plague, rather than the plague of the heart;* and *bow down our backs* under any load of affliction, rather than that which shall at last crush those who have refused to accept of thy gospel, and to take upon their shoulders the light burden which a gracious Saviour would lay upon them.

Ver. 10

SECT. XXV.

The Apostle shews in this and the next section that the rejection of Israel is not final: but that the time shall come, when, to the unspeakable joy of the Christian world, the Jewish nation shall be brought into the church of Christ. Rom. XI. 11—24.

ROMANS XI. 11.

SECT. XXV.

I HAVE asserted above the rejection of the Jewish nation in general; yet I have observed, that it is not total, so that none of them should remain objects of mercy. And do I assert it to be final? *Do I then say, they have so stumbled,* as *that,* as a nation, *they should fall* into irrecoverable ruin, and never more be owned by God as his people? *God forbid! but* I assert, that *by this fall of theirs, salvation* [*is*] at the present [*come*] *to the Gentiles;* the future consequence of which shall be *to provoke them to* a holy *emulation* of sharing the blessings and benefits to be expected from their own Messiah, when they shall see so many heathen nations enjoy them.

Rom. XI. 11.

ROMANS XI. 11.

I SAY then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12 *But* these should be no unwelcome tidings to you Gentiles: for *if their fall* [*be*] by accident *the riches of the world, and their diminution the riches of the Gentiles,* by scattering the preachers of the gospel among them, by proving our veracity and integrity, and in some measure exciting compassion too; though their rejecting us, in itself considered, might rather appear as an argument against it; *how much more* shall the bringing in *their* whole *fulness,* that is, the whole body of the Jewish nation, be a means of propagating the gospel much farther, and recovering multitudes, by whom it hath been rejected, from their scepticism and infidelity, when so great an event appears in accomplishment of its known predictions[a]. *For I now speak to you*

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulness?

13 For I speak to you

[a] Accomplishment of its known predictions.] So many of the prophecies of the *Old Testament,* do evidently refer to the reduction of the Jews into their own land,

Rom. XI. 13.

you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

you Gentiles, and I do it with tenderness and respect, *as I am*, by a special designation of Providence, *the apostle of the Gentiles*; *I* therein *extol my office*, and esteem it the most signal honour of my life to be employed in it.

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them.

And 14 while I thus address you, it is also with a desire *that I may*, if possible, *excite to emulation* [*them who are*] *my* brethen according to the *flesh, and* who are dear to me as the members of my own body; that, if I may not prevail for the recovery of their nation in general, I *may* at least *save some of them*; while I speak of these kind purposes, which I assuredly know God will accomplish towards the whole Jewish people in his appointed time. And this thought gives new spirit to my address to you, as I hope it may not only tend to your edification and salvation, but also to theirs [b].

15 For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world; what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead?

In like manner, when I wish their recovery, 15 it is not for their sakes alone; but also with respect to those happy consequences which I know it will have upon the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles. *For*, as I hinted above, *if their rejection* [*were*] *the reconciliation of* so great a part of *the* heathen *world* to God, as it was the means of sending the gospel of peace among them; *what* [*will*] *the reception* [*of them be*] *but life from the dead?* What joy will it necessarily give, and what a general spread of the gospel will it naturally produce?

16 For if the first-fruit

And this blessed event we may assuredly ex- 16 pect; *for if the first-fruits* [*be*] *holy, so* [*is*] *the lump.*

land, as the people of the Messiah, that I can by no means doubt of the certainty of that event. Compare Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Ezek. xi. 17—21; chap. xx. 34—44; chap. xxxiv. 13, 14; chap. xxxv. 25—29; chap. xxxvi. 24—28; chap. xxxvii. 21—28; Amos ix. 14, 15; Obad. ver. 17; Mic. vii. 14, 15; Zech. xiv. 10, 11. Hos. i. 10, 11. And the wonderful preservation of them as a distinct people, thus far, not only leaves a possibility of this great event, but encourages our hope of it. When it shall be accomplished, it will be so unparalleled, as necessarily to excite a general attention, and to fix upon men's minds, such an almost irresistible demonstration both of the *Old* and *New Testament revelation* as will probably captivate the minds of many thousands of deists, in countries professedly christian, (of which, under such *corrupt establishments* as generally prevail, there will of course be increasing multitudes;) nor will this only captivate their understanding, but will have the greatest tendency to awaken a sense of true religion in their hearts; and this will be a means of propagating the *gospel* with an amazing velocity in *Pagan and Mahometan countries*; which probably had been *evangelized* long ago, had genuine christianity prevailed in those who have made a profession, and God knows, for the most part, a very scandalous profession of its forms.—The 15th verse has so natural a connection with the 12th, that Elsner includes the 13th and 14th in a parenthesis.

b Also to theirs.] Perhaps we can no where find an instance of a more popular and affectionate *turn* than this, in which the *apostle* seems to find a reason for his zeal to convert the Gentiles, in his love to his own countrymen the Jews.

c *Wild*

SECT. XXV.

Rom. XI. 16.

lump. The consecration of them was looked upon as in effect the consecration of all. And so would I look upon the conversion of some few of the Jewish nation, as an earnest of the conversion of all the rest. *And* so much the rather, when I consider, how eminently dear to God those pious patriarchs were from whom they have descended: for *if the root* [*be*] *holy, the branches* [*are likewise*] *so*, and will surely at length be regarded as such. And this, though some of them be at present in so melancholy a state; *for if some of the branches were broken off, and thou*, O Gentile, *being*, as it were, a scion of *a wild olive, wert graffed in among them* that remained [c], *and art with them partaker of*, and nourished by, *the root and fatness of the good olive*; being not only a graft upon another stock, but a meaner graft on a stock originally nobler aud more excellent: *Boast not thyself* presumptuously and ungratefully *against the* natural *branches; and if thou boastest*, [*remember*] to thy humiliation, [*that*] *thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.* Thou hast received many benefits from Abraham's seed, and the covenant made with him, but they have received none from thee. *Wilt thou therefore* object, and *say*, "*The* natural *branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in*; and therefore we may glory over them as they once did over us;" *Well*, take this thought at least along with thee, *they were broken off for* [*their*] *infidelity, and thou* hitherto *standest* in their place, *through faith.* Therefore *be not high-minded* and arrogant, *but fear* [d], lest thou by thy sins forfeit the privileges to which thou art so wonderfully raised. *For if God spared not the branches, which were according to nature, neither will he by any means spare thee*, if thine unbelief make thee, after all thy peculiar obligations, as bad, and in that respect,

fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive-tree, wert graffed in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;

18 Boast not against the branches: but if thou boast thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

c *Wild olive graffed in among them.*] It is very improper to object, that it is unnatural to suppose an *ignoble branch graffed on a rich stock*; for it was not necessary that the *simile* taken from *inoculation* should hold in all its particulars; and the engagement to humility arises in a considerable degree from the circumstance objected against. Had the *scion* been nobler than the *stock*, its dependence on it for life and nourishment, would render it unfit that it should boast against it; how much more, when the case was the reverse of what in human usage is practised, and the *wild olive is ingraffed on the good.*

d *Be not high-minded, &c.*] *Archbishop Tillotson* well observes, that this *caution* ill suits the claim to *infallibility*, which the *modern church of Rome*, so arrogantly makes, amidst all the absurdities with which her *doctrine*, and her *ritual* are loaded.

Rom. XI. 22.

22 Behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness. Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

respect, even worse, than they. *Behold therefore*, on the whole, a remarkable display of *the* intermingled *goodness and severity of God*, and endeavour to improve both well! *Towards them that fell*, thou *indeed* seest a memorable instance of his *severity*; *but to thee*, a display of gentleness and *goodness, if thou* wilt be careful to *continue in* [*his*] *goodness* and endeavour gratefully and dutifully to improve it; *else thou also shalt be cut off*, for the blessed God will not bear always to be insulted with the petulancy of sinners.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.

And I would have you farther to consider, as a motive to think of the Jews with respect, rather than contempt, that *they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, shall be graffed on again*, and restored to their former privileges. *For* it is certain, *God is able again to ingraff them*: hopeless as their state may seem, both with respect to their obstinacy and their misery, his powerful access to their mind can subdue their prejudices against the gospel as thou mayest easily argue from what thou hast thyself experienced. 23

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive-tree?

For if thou wert, as I may properly enough express it, *cut off from the olive-tree which was naturally wild, and contrary to* the course and process of *nature, wert graffed on the good olive-tree*; if thou wert admitted into covenant with God, though descended from parents that were strangers and enemies, *how much more shall they who are the natural* [*branches*] to whom the promises do originally belong, *be graffed on their own olive?* God will not seem to do so wonderful a thing, in restoring them to what might seem the privilege of their birth right and descent, and saving the seed of Abraham his friend; as he hath done, in calling you sinners of the Gentiles, to participate the blessings of which you had not the least notion, and to which you cannot be supposed to have had any imaginable claim. 24

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us set ourselves seriously to pause upon the conduct of God towards the Jews and Gentiles in that part of it which the apostle here describes, and rejoice with trembling in it. Let us reflect on the *Divine severity to them*, and *the Divine goodness to us*. Ver. 22

SECT. XXV.

us. What immense goodness! That we should be taken from that wretched condition in which we were utterly ignorant of the great Author and end of our being, of the nature of true happiness, and the way of obtaining it; that we and our offspring might be *graffed on the good stock*, be called to the most important of those privileges and hopes with which the seed of Abraham were honoured and enriched. We *partake of the fatness of the good olive*; may our fruit abound to the honour of God, to the benefit of mankind.

Ver. 22 24 17

Let us cherish the most benevolent and tender disposition towards the house of Israel, to whose spiritual privileges we are raised; and let us earnestly pray that they may be awakened to emulation; especially as their *fulness is to be the riches of the Gentiles*, and *the receiving them again, as life from the dead* to the languishing and decaying church.

11

In the mean time, as the gospel comes to us in so awful a manner, vindicated from the contempt of former despisers, let us solemnly charge upon our souls this lesson of holy caution, these salutary words, (O that they may be continually present to our thoughts!) *Be not high-minded, but fear:* whatever our privileges, whatever our experiences are, whatever our confidence may be, let us dwell upon the thought; for there is no Christian upon earth that hath not reason to fear, in proportion to the degree in which he feels his thoughts towering on high, and grows into any conceit of himself. Daily let us recollect what we were in our natural estate; and what, with all our improvements and attainments, we should immediately be, if God should forsake us.

20

Let us pray therefore that we may *continue in God's goodness*; and whoever may appear to fall from it, let us not *glory*; but rather mourn over them, and pray for their recovery and salvation to that God who is able to recover from the most obstinate infidelity and impenitence, and to *graff on* not only foreign branches, but what may seem yet more wonderful, those that have appeared more than *twice dead*.

22

18

SECT. XXVI.

The apostle farther illustrates the future conversion of the Jews to the gospel; and concludes the argument with observing, that in the mean time, their obstinacy is over-ruled to such happy purposes, as make the whole scene a most glorious display of the unsearchable wisdom of God. Rom. XI. 25, *to the end.*

SECT. XXVI.

ROMANS XI. 25.

AND now, my *brethren*, upon the whole, I will conclude what I have to say upon this interesting

Rom. XI. 25.

ROMANS XI. 25.

FOR I would not, brethren, that ye should

should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits;) that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

interesting and affecting subject, which I have indeed enlarged upon pretty copiously; for it lies with great weight upon my heart. And therefore *I would not have you to be ignorant of this* material circumstance relating to the great *mystery* in the dispensation before us, which, on the first views of it, may appear very unaccountable; *lest you should have too high an opinion of yourselves*, when you see the Jews rejected for their fatal error. I would not, I say, have you ignorant of this, *that* the lamentable *blindness* and infatuation we have been speaking of, *is in part happened unto Israel*, and has spread itself over by far the greatest part of the Jewish people, not that they may utterly perish, and be for ever cut off; but that they may continue in this humbled and rejected state, *till* a certain period arrive, when *the fulness of the Gentiles*, the appointed harvest of them, *shall be brought in* [a], and incorporated with those already associated to the church of Christ. *And so*, when this happy season marked out in the Divine decrees, though to us unknown, *shall* be come, that blessed event shall make way for it, and *all* the seed of *Israel* shall, by a general conversion, *be saved* from its dispersion and misery, and fixed in a state of covenant-favour and acceptance with God again. *As it is written*, (Isa. lix. 20,) *a Deliverer shall come out of Sion, and he shall turn away* the punishment of their former *impiety from Jacob*, when he hath brought them to true repentance [b]. As it is added,

SECT. XXVI.

Rom. XI. 25.

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

26

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when

27

a *Till the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in*, &c.] It is well remarked, by my late learned, pious and candid friend, Dr. *William Harris*, that as *this epistle* was written about the year 57, that is, long after the most remarkable conversion of the Jews, by the first preaching of the *apostles*, and after Paul had been about 30 years engaged in his work, it appears, that the *prophecies* relating to the calling of the Jews were not accomplished then, and consequently are not yet accomplished. *Harris's Practical Discourses on the Messiah*, p. 91. Dr. Whitby very justly observes, that there is a *double harvest* of the Gentiles spoken of by Paul, in this *chapter*; the *first*, called *their riches*, verse 12, as consisting in the preaching the *gospel* to all nations, whereby indeed they were happily enriched with Divine knowledge and grace; the *second*, *the bringing in their fulness*, which expresses a more glorious conversion of many to the *true faith* of *Christians*, in the latter age of the world, which is to be occasioned by the conversion of the Jews. *Whit. in Loc.* This answers *Orobius's* objection, *(Limb. Collat.* p. 94,) that Paul's account is contrary to the *prophecies* of the *Old Testament*, which represent the recovery of the *Gentile nations*, as consequent on the redemption of Israel.

b *As it is written*, Isa. lix. 20, &c.] This *text*, as it stands in the *Hebrew*, seems different from the sense in which it is here quoted. *A Deliverer shall come—to those that turn from iniquity.* But if Christ be here foretold as *a Deliverer to the Jews*, it is all that the *apostle's* purpose requires. Yet it is observable the LXX agrees better with the words of the *quotation*, as it possibly might with the *original reading*; and it is certain, that the general tenor of God's covenant with Israel gave no hope of

SECT. XXVI.

ed, *And this* [*is*] *my covenant* which I shall make *with them when I shall take away their sins*, that is, when their sins as a nation are remitted, it shall be to bring them again into covenant with myself. And thus, on the whole, *with respect to the gospel* [*they are*] indeed regarded as *enemies for your sakes*; that is, for their obstinate rejecting the gospel, God hath rejected them, in favour of you, and that he might receive you into his church as in their stead[c]: *but as for the election*, that remnant of them which God hath graciously chosen to be subdued by the grace of the gospel, [*they are*] *beloved for their fathers sakes*. God's gracious regard to the memory of their pious ancestors, engages him to take care that some of their seed shall always continue in covenant with him, till at length he recover them as a nation, and astonish the world with their unequalled glory and felicity. And this shall most assuredly be, *for the gifts and calling of God* [*are*] *not to be repented of*[d]: he doth not resume the gifts he hath once bestowed, nor retract the calls he hath once given, but will maintain a remembrance of them, and act in perfect harmony with them, in all his dispensations; according to that wise plan which he hath laid in his eternal counsels, and from which no unforeseen contingency can ever cause him to vary.

As then ye Gentiles *were once*, and for a long time, *disobedient to God*, and buried in ignorance and superstition, *but now have obtained mercy, by means of their disobedience*; God having taken you to be his people instead of the Jews; *So they also, having been disobedient* to the gospel, and the more prejudiced against it *on occasion of your* admittance to such distinguishing *mercy*, yet shall not be utterly and finally ruined, but *shall also* to the glory of Divine

Rom. XI. 27.

when I shall take away their sins.

28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also not now believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

of deliverance after rejection and chastisement, but in a way of repentance and reformation. Compare Lev. xxvi. 39—45; Deut. xxx. 1—10.

c *Enemies for your sakes.*] The most natural sense of these words, were they considered alone, might seem, that the calling the Gentiles prejudiced the Jews against the *gospel*; but as they generally rejected it before the Gentiles were called, I, on the whole, prefer the sense given in the *paraphrase*. The different sense of διὰ here supposed, may seem a strong objection against it; but if διὰ be rendered *with a regard to*, it may be applicable to both.

d *Not to be repented of.*] Elsner has produced many passages from approved *Greek classics*, in which the word ἀμεταμέλητος is used exactly in this sense; and has collected in his curious *note* on this *verse*, many testimonies of Pagan authors relating to the Divine perfections, which might have taught some Christian divines to speak more honourably of them than they do in some of their writings.

e *Shut*

SECT. XXVI.

Rom. XI. 32.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Divine grace at length, themselves, *obtain* the *mercy* they have envied you. And thus the Divine goodness is illustrated, even by that which might seem most contrary to it: *for* it appears, that *God hath*, for a certain time, *shut up all under* obstinacy and *disobedience*[e], suffering each in their turn to revolt, under different degrees of light, *that he might* in a more remarkable manner *have mercy on all*, and glorify the riches of his grace, in favours bestowed on those who evidently appeared so undeserving.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

And now, to conclude this article. Who in the view of such a series of events must not cry out, *O the* awful and unfathomable *depths of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God!* How rich are the treasures of his mercy, how deep the contrivances of his wisdom, how boundless the stretch of his knowledge! *How unsearchable*, and yet how unquestionable, [*are*] *his judgments! and his ways such as cannot be traced out! For who hath* completely *known the mind of the Lord* in these things, *or who hath been his counsellor*, in forming the plan of them? *Who*, whether Jew or Greek, can pretend, that he *hath first given* any thing *to him*, or conferred any obligation upon him? Let him make out the claim, *and* we may answer for it, that *it shall be* exactly *repaid him again. For*, on the whole, *of him*, as the original Author, *and through him*, as the gracious Preserver, *and for him*, as the ultimate end, [*are*] *all things*[f]. *To him* therefore [*be*] *glory for ever* and ever; and let all the creation join their utmost force to advance it to the highest degrees, and unite their voices in saying, *Amen*.

33

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

34

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

35

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

36

IMPROVE-

e *Shut up all under disobedience.* &c.] It is of great importance to observe, that this refers to different periods. *First*, God suffered the Gentiles, in the early ages of the world, to revolt, and then took the *Abrahamic* family as a peculiar seed to himself; and bestowed extraordinary favours upon them. *Afterwards*, he permitted them, by unbelief and disobedience, to fall, and took in the Gentiles on their believing; and he did even this, with an intent to make that very *mercy* to the Gentiles a *means* of provoking the Jews to jealousy, and so bring them to *faith*, by that which had at first been an offence in the way to it. This was truly a mystery in the Divine conduct, which the *apostle* most rationally, as well as respectfully, adores, in the concluding words of the *chapter*.

f *Of him, through him, for him,* &c.] *Antoninus*, speaking of *nature*, that is, of God, has an expression, which one would imagine he had borrowed from this of Paul, ἐκ σοῦ πάντα, ἐν σοὶ πάντα, εἰς σὲ πάντα, *all things are of thee, in thee, and to thee.*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XXVI. LET our whole souls be engaged to glorify this great and blessed God, *from whom, and through whom,* we, and all the creatures exist. O that it may be our eternal employment to render adoration, and blessing, and glory *to him!* To him, whose *counsels none can trace:* to him, who hath prevented us all with the blessings of his goodness; so that far from being able to *confer any obligation on him,* for which we should pretend to demand a *recompense,* on the contrary, we must own, that the more we are enabled and animated to do for him, the more indeed are we obliged to him. We cannot pretend to have *known the mind of the Lord* in all its extent, or to have been admitted into his secret counsels. He is continually doing *marvellous things, which we know not:* yet surely we know enough to admire and adore. We know enough to cry out in raptures of delightful surprise, *O the depths of the riches, both of his wisdom and goodness!*

Ver. 36, 33, 35, 34

33 One instance, though but one of many, we have here before us, in his mysterious conduct towards *Jews* and *Gentiles;* in which, occurrences that seem the most unaccountable, and indeed the most lamentable, are over-ruled by God to answer most benevolent purposes. That the sin of the *Jews* should be the *salvation of the Gentiles,* and yet the mercy shewn to the *Gentiles,* in its consequences the salvation of the *Jews,* and so both should be *concluded under sin, that God might* more illustriously *have mercy* on both!

32

26 O that the blessed time were come, when *all Israel shall be saved:* when the *Deliverer,* who is long since *come out of Sion,* *shall turn away iniquity from Jacob;* and *the fulness of the Gentiles come in,* so that *from the rising to the going down of the sun, the Lord shall be one, and his name one.* Our faith waits the glorious event, and may perhaps wait it even to the end of life. But a generation to be born shall see it: *for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.* Let our assured confidence in the Divine promise, travel on, as it were, to the accomplishment over mountains of difficulty, that may lie in our way; and let our hearts be cheered with this happy prospect, under all the grief which they feel, when we see how few now believe the report of the *gospel,* and to how few God hath revealed his arm.

25, 29

While the glorious expected event is delayed, let us add our fervent intercessions with God, to these prayers, by which the church has in every age been endeavouring to hasten it on. They are all written in the book of God's remembrance, and shall all be reviewed and answered in their season. Let us in the mean time comfort

comfort ourselves with this reviving thought, *that the covenant which God will make with Israel in that day*, is in the main the same he has made with us, *to take away sin.* Eased of such an insupportable burden, that would sink us into final ruin and despair, let us bear up cheerfully against all discouragements, and glory in the gospel which brings us this invaluable blessing; how long, and how generally soever, it may be, *to the Jews a stumbling block*, and *to the Greeks foolishness.* SECT. XXVI. 27

SECT. XXVII.

The Apostle enters on a series of most admirable practical exhortations and directions; in which he labours to persuade Christians to act in a manner worthy of that gospel, the excellency of which he had been illustrating. And here, particularly, urges an entire consecration to God, and a care to glorify him, in their respective stations, by a faithful improvement of their various talents. Rom. XII. 1—11.

ROMANS XII. 1.

I Beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

ROMANS XII. 1.

SECT. XXVII. Rom. XII. 1.

HAVING thus dispatched what I proposed in the argumentative part of the epistle, and suggested a variety of considerations, which may convince you of the great excellency of the gospel, and the singular favour which God has shewn to those Gentiles whom he hath called into the Christian church, and to that remnant of the Jews who are kept in so happy a relation to them, while the bulk of their nation are fallen into a state of rejection; let me now endeavour to animate you all to behave in a suitable manner. *I intreat you therefore*[a], my dear *brethren*, partakers with me in this holy calling, *by* all *the tender mercies of* our most compassionate *God*, *that* instead of the animal victims, whose slaughtered bodies you have been accustomed to offer, either to the true God, or to idols, *you* would now *present*, as it were, at his spiritual altar, *your* own *bodies*, as *a living sacrifice*, *holy* and *well-pleasing to God.* Let all the

[a] *I intreat you therefore.*] Some apply this to the Gentiles; and as most of the members of the church at Rome were originally so, it is reasonable to believe the *apostle* had them principally in view: but not excluding the *converted Jews*, who, as he had just before expressed it, *remained as a remnant according to the election of grace*, when the *rest were hardened*, and therefore had surely reason to acknowledge the *tender mercies of God* to them, and were under strong obligations to devote themselves to him, I have accordingly in the *paraphrase* applied it to both.

[b] *Bodies*

SECT. XXVII.

Rom. XII. 1.

the members of your bodies, and all the faculties of your souls[b], being sanctified and animated by Divine grace, be employed in the service of him to whom you are under such immense obligations. This he requires of you, [*as*] *your rational service;* and it will be much more acceptable to him than any ceremonial forms though most exactly prescribed in a ritual of his own appointment. *And* as you desire to engage his approbation and favour, *be not*, in the general course of your temper and actions, *conformed* to the sentiments and customs of *this* vain and sinful *world; but* rather *be* ye *transformed, in the renewing of your mind:* endeavour to become new creatures, contracting new habits, and engaging in new pursuits, under the influence of the Divine Spirit on your hearts; *that you may* not only be speculatively acquainted with the doctrines, precepts, and design of the gospel, but may *experimentally know that will of God* [*which is*] in itself so excellently *good*, and which, as it is most *acceptable* to him, has the most apparent tendency to purify *and perfect* our natures[c].

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

3 *And I* particularly *say*, and give it in charge[d], *according to that grace which is given to me* as an inspired apostle, *to every one that is among you*, as if personally named, to take the greatest heed, that he be not exalted into spiritual pride, by the gifts and privileges which God hath conferred upon you, I charge each *not to arrogate* [*to himself*] *above what he ought to think*[e], *but that he think* of himself *with* modesty, *sobriety*, and humility; *according to the measure of* that *faith*, and in correspondent proportion to those gifts, *which God hath distributed to every man* among

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

b *Bodies and souls.*] The *body* is here by a usual *figure* put for the *whole person*, nor can the *soul* be now presented to God otherwise than as dwelling in the *body*, or truly consecrated to him, unless the *body* be employed in his *service;* nor on the other hand, can the *body be presented as a living sacrifice*, otherwise than as acted and animated by the *soul*.—For the propriety of the word παραστησαι, which properly signifies, *placing the victim before the altar;* see *Elsner in loc.*

c *Good, acceptable, and perfect.*] L'Enfant explains each of these as opposed to the *Jewish ritual;* this Christian *sacrifice* being more *excellent* in itself, Ezek. xx. 25. more pleasing to God, Psal. xl. 7, 8; and tending more *to make us perfect*, Heb. vii. 19; I understand it as referring to all the preceptive part of Christianity, the excellency of which they will best understand, who set themselves most exactly to practise upon it.

d *Say, and give it in charge.*] So λεγειν signifies, Acts xv. 24. See *Raphel. Annot. ex Herodot. in loc.*

e *Not to arrogate, &c.*] *Raphelius, Annot. ex Herod. in loc.* has shewn, that υπερφρονειν has properly this signification.

f *According*

SECT. XXVII.

Rom. XII. 3.

among you. And surely when you consider it is God who hath given all, there will appear little reason to magnify yourselves on any distinguishing share of his bounty, which any one may have received. Especially, when you remember, that this distribution is made, not only, or chiefly, for your own sake, but out of regard to the good of the whole: *For as in* 4
one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same use, but each its proper function and service, appointed by the wise Former, and gracious Preserver of the whole; *So* 5
we, though many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of each other: we should therefore endeavour each of us to know his own place and condition, and mutually to make our various capacities as serviceable as we can.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Having therefore gifts, all proceeding from 6
God, the great fountain of every good thing, and *different according to* the diversity of *the grace* that is *given unto us; whether* [*it be*] *prophecy*, as enabling us to foretell future events, or to make discourses for the edification and direction of the church, [*let us be employed in it*] *according to the* degree *of* our gift, which is in *proportion* to the degree *of faith*, that is respectively in us[f]: *Or* [*having*] *the office of minis-* 7
try; as deacons, let a man employ himself actively and faithfully *in* his *ministration*[g]: *or* if he be *an instructor* of catechumens, who are to be fitted for the communion of the church, let him continue humbly, tenderly, and patiently, *in* the work of *teaching: Or* if he be an *ex-* 8
horter, whose peculiar business it is to urge Christians

6 Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith:

7 Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth,

f *According to the proportion of faith.*] Many interpret this, "Do it according to the general scheme of Divine revelation, not setting up any novel interpretations of scripture, injurious to it." But *Raphelius* (*Annot. ex Xen. in loc.*) objects that λογος, not αναλογια, would be the proper word to express that. Dr. *Sam. Clarke*, (*Posthum. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 6,) by *faith* understands the *trust reposed in them*, or the nature and use of the gift they had; which is a very unusual sense of the word πιστις. The *Rhemish Jesuits* suppose, it was a *confession*, or summary, of *faith*, drawn up by all the *apostles* in conjunction: to which they refer, Rom. vi. 17; chap. xvi. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 20; Gal i. 6; Acts xv. 6; none of which *texts* seem to imply any thing like it; nor is it pretended that such a *creed* was ever quoted in *antiquity*, by the name of αναλογια πιστεως, or indeed that I can find, by any other. If we suppose the *prophetic gift* to be given *in proportion to the exercise of faith*, that is, of dependance on God, when he signified a disposition in general to impart it, we have I think the clearest explication the *phrase* will admit. See Vol. VII. p. 184, *note* b on Mark xi. 22.

g *Employ himself in ministration.*] It seems the word εχω is understood. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.—The word διακονια properly signifies the *ministration of the deacon*, and so interpreted gives the distinctest sense.

h *He*

SECT. XXVII.

Christians to duty, or to comfort them in the discharge of it, let him continue *in* his *exhortation: he that giveth* any thing to a charitable use, [*let him do it*] *with* true *simplicity*, and unfeigned liberality of heart; neither seeking the applause of men, nor any other sinister end which he could desire to conceal: *he that presideth* in the distribution of charities so collected, let him do it *with diligence*[h]; that he may know the case proposed, and that *he* may see that nothing be wanting to make the charity as effectual as possible; and as for him *that sheweth mercy*, that is, who has the care of those who on account of peculiarly grievous calamities are the objects of particular compassion, let him do it *with* an obliging *cheerfulness* of temper, cautiously guarding against any disgust at what may seem mean and disagreeable in the offices which must necessarily be performed for such.

Rom. XII. 8.

horteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 On the whole, [*let*] *love* [*be*] *undissembled*, and all your expressions of mutual friendship as free as possible from base flattery, and from vain compliment. *Abhor that which is evil*, in every instance, and *adhere* resolutely *to that which is good.* Practise benevolence in all its branches, and every other virtue, with the greatest determination and perseverance of mind; whatever discouragements may for the present arise. Do not only abound in the exercises of common humanity; but *in brotherly love*, as Christians, [*be*] *mutually full of tender affection*[i], yea, cultivate those gentle dispositions of mind with delight; and endeavour to think so modestly of yourselves, that you may still be *in honour preferring one another.* Let each in his turn, be ready to think better of his brethren than of himself; and so to prevent them in every office of respect[k], and out of regard to their advantage,

9 *Let* love *be* without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.

10 *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

h *He that presideth with diligence.*] In this and the following clause, I follow the interpretation of Lord *Barrington*, (*Misc. Sacra.* Vol. I. p. 77—80,) and refer to him for the reasons which I think sufficient to justify it; only mentioning the application of the word προστάτις, in the same sense to *Phœbe*, Rom. xvi. 2, who could not be supposed a *ruler* in the church. Προϊστάμενος, properly signifies *one who presides*, but, *in what*, the connection must determine. For the extraordinary mercy exercised among the *ancient Christians*, see *Lucian de Morte Peregrin. apud Opera*, Vol. II. p. 764. *Edit. Salmur.* 1619; and *Julian Epist.* xlix.

i *In brotherly love*, [*be*] *mutually full of tender affection.*] Perhaps the extremely expressive words of the *original*, τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, might justly be rendered, *delight in the tenderest fraternal affection to each other.* The word στοργὴ not only signifying *a strong affection*, like that of *parent animals* to their *offspring*, but *a delight in it*, as the ingenious Dr. *Bulgay* has justly observed in his excellent *Sermon on this text.*

k Preventing them in every office of respect.]

tage, to give up with as good a grace as possible any thing in which his own honour or personal interest may be concerned. When you are actually engaged, be *not slothful* and sluggish *in* the prosecution of your proper *business* in life, but endeavour to rouze your spirits; so that it may be dispatched with vigour and alacrity, and without an unnecessary expence of time. For this purpose be *fervent*, warm and active *in spirit:* and certainly you will see the greatest obligation and encouragement to be so, when you consider that you are *serving the Lord* Jesus Christ [1], to whose cendescension and love you are infinitely indebted. May you always attend his service with the greatest zeal and delight, and may every action of life be brought into a due subordination to that great end!

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Rom. XII. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

How rich were a christian in practical directions for the conduct of life, even if this excellent chapter were his only treasure of this kind. Let such scriptures as these be welcome to us; the scriptures that teach us our *duty*, as well as those that display before our eyes the richest variety of spiritual *privileges*. Indeed it is one of our greatest privileges, to be taught our duty, if at the same time we are inclined by Divine grace to perform it, and if we are not, we have no privileges that will prevent, none that will not encrease our ruin.

Wisely does the great apostle lay the foundation of all virtue in a principle of unfeigned *piety towards God:* in *presenting* before him *our bodies as living sacrifices.* How great an honour and happiness will it be to us, to do it.—That we may be engaged to this

Ver. 1

respect.] Archbishop Leighton well observes, (*Expository Works*, Vol. II. p. 429.) that the *original words*, τῃ τιμῃ ἀλλήλους προηγεμενοι, are very expressive, and might literally be rendered, *leading on each other with respect, or in giving honour going before each other.* This I have endeavoured to express in this clause of the paraphrase, but have retained our version as expressing something of the esteem from which this respectful behaviour should proceed. L'Enfant renders it *mutually prevent one another with honour.*

1 *Serving the Lord.*] Several *copies* for κυριῳ read καιρῳ, *serving the time*, that is, husbanding your opportunities; and Dr. Mill, trusting chiefly to the authority of Jerome, and some other Latin translations, admits this as the *true reading*. But it is by no means supported by an adequate number of Greek manuscripts; and besides, that it would be an unnatural and inelegant expression in that sense, it sinks the noble sense of the commonly received reading so much, that I could by no means persuade myself to follow it. It is a lively exhortation to Christians to be always serving Christ, and to cultivate the temper which the apostle expresses, when he says ημοι το ζην Χριστος, Phil. i. 28. *to me to live is Christ.* It also suggests a motive to inforce the former exhortation; as I have hinted in the paraphrase.

SECT. XXVII.

this, let us often think of his tender mercies, so many and so great; and especially of that most illustrious of all mercies, his redeeming us by the blood of his Son, and calling us into the christian covenant. Can there be a more *reasonable service* than this? that we should be consecrated to our Creator, to our Redeemer, to our Sanctifier, to our constant Benefactor, to our supreme end and happiness?—The world indeed neglects him, yea, even what is called the christian world, neglects him, to such a degree, as if we did not continually see it, we should not suppose to be possible. But let us not in this instance be conformed to it. O that Divine grace may so transform and renew our hearts, that we may not!

2 Nothing but experience can teach us, how *good, and perfect, and acceptable, the will of God is*, and how happy a thing it is to be governed, in every respect, by its unerring declarations.

Let us remember, that as our sanctification, so also our humility and our usefulness are his will; and therefore let us endea-

3 vour to conquer every high *conceit of ourselves*, and every sordid

4 and selfish sentiment. Let us often reflect, that we are all mem-

7, &c. bers of each other; and being so happily united in Christ, have all but one interest, which is that of the body, and of its glorified head. Whether our station in the church be more public, or private; whether our capacities and endowments be more or less distinguished; let us all be faithful, be affectionate, be disinterested, be active, endeavouring to *serve Christ*, and even the poorest of his people, with *simplicity*, with *diligence*, with *cheerfulness; preferring others to ourselves; abhorring* that love which is spent in hypocritical words and unmeaning forms; cultivating that which gives to the soul tenderness, condescension, and vigour. In one

11 word, let us remember we are *serving the Lord*, the Lord *Christ*: and doing all in his name, and for his sake, let this add fervour to our spirit, zeal to our diligence, and abasement to our humility, for nothing surely can be so animating, nothing so melting, nothing so humbling, as to recollect, on the one hand, how much we owe him, and on the other, how little we are able, how much less we are careful to do for his service.

SECT. XXVIII.

The apostle pursues his practical exhortations, and particularly recommends devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, a peaceful temper, and a readiness to forgive injuries. Rom. XII. 12, *to the end.*

SECT. XXVIII. Rom. XII. 12.

ROMANS XII. 12.

I HAVE been exhorting you, my brethren, to many Christian duties and graces, and among the

ROMANS XII. 12. REJOICING in hope; patient in tribulation;

tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

the rest, to the greatest activity and zeal in the service of Christ. Let me exhort you to guard against such a dejection of spirit as would enervate that holy activity and zeal. On the contrary, [*be*] you, that are the servants of Christ, always *rejoicing in* the *hope* of those glorious rewards which your Divine Master, in the riches of his grace, hath set before you; and in that support which he gives you in the way to that eternal glory. And animated by that hope, be *patient in* all the *tribulation* which you may bear in his cause, or from his hands in the wise disposals of his gracious Providence. And while under these pressures, *continuing instant in prayer*, draw down those necessary supplies of his holy Spirit which may carry you honourably through all your trials; Liberally *communicating to the necessities of the saints*, and accounting nothing your own which their relief requires you to furnish out: particularly *pursuing* that *hospitality* which present circumstances so peculiarly demand [a], especially towards those strangers that are exiles, or travellers in the cause of Christianity. Stay not till occasions of this kind force themselves upon you and much less, till importunity extort the favour, as it were, against your will; but, like Abraham, look out for proper objects of such a bounty, and follow after them, to bring them back to your houses. On the other hand, *bless them who* are pursuing you with evil intentions, and *persecute you* with the greatest severity for conscience sake. Wish them well, and pray for their conversion; yea, if they should go on to revile you, for all the expressions of your love, go on to *bless; and curse* them *not*, though provoked by their bitterest imprecations against you. Make it a constant maxim with yourselves, to maintain a constant sympathy with your brethren of mankind, which may lead you to *rejoice with them that rejoice, and* to *weep with them that weep*: to congratulate others on their felicity,

SECT. XXVIII.

Rom. XII. 12.

13 Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality.

13

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

14

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

15

a *Pursuing hospitality.*] It was the more proper for the apostle so frequently to inforce this duty, as the want of public inns (much less common, than among us; though not quite unknown, Luke x. 34, 35,) rendered it difficult for strangers to get accommodations, and as many christians might be banished their native country for religion, and perhaps laid under a kind of bann of excommunication, both among Jews and heathens, which would make it a high crime, for any of their former brethren, to receive them into their houses.—For the illustration which the paraphrase gives of the energy of this text, I am obliged to Mr. *Blackwell, Sacred Class.* Vol. I, p. 232.

SECT. XXVIII

felicity, and to bear your part with them in their sorrows, as members of one body, who have all, as it were, one common feeling [*Be*] *entirely united in your regards for each other* [b]. Let each condescend to the rest, and agree with them, as far as he fairly and honourably can: and where you must differ, do not, by any means, quarrel about it, but allow the same liberty of sentiments you would claim. *Affect not high things;* either to possess exalted stations of life, or to converse with those that bear them; *but* rather *condescend,* and accommodate yourselves *to men of low rank*; for it is chiefly among the poorer part of mankind that the gospel is like to prevail: and all christians ought, in this respect, to bear the image of their great Master, who spent most of his time in conversing with such. *Be not* so *wise in your own conceit,* as to think yourselves above the Divine direction, or that of your fellow-christians, in this respect, or in any other. *Render to none evil for evil;* nor imagine that any man's injurious treatment of you will warrant your returning the injury; but act in such a cautious and circumspect manner, that it may evidently appear you *provide* against the malignity which will lead many to put the worst constructions upon your actions. And do only those *things* which may be above the need of excuse, and may appear, at the first view, fair, and *reputable in the sight of all men. If it be possible,* and at least *to the utmost of your power,* as far as it is consistent with duty, honour, and conscience, *live peaceably with all men;* not only your own countrymen, or fellow christians, but Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians [c].

Rom. XII. 16.

16 *Be* of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things; but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men.

19 Upon the whole, my dearly *beloved* brethren whatever wrongs you may receive, *revenge not yourselves* on those that have injured you; *but rather* yield, and *give place to* the *wrath* of the enemy;

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath;

b *Be entirely united in your regards for each other.*] This, on the whole, seemed the most proper *version* of, Το αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες; and though Dr. Whitby paraphrases it, "Desire the same things for others that you do for yourselves, and would have them desire for you;" I think the sense given above preferable, as it supposes less of an ellipsis, which I would not suppose without apparent necessity.

c Greeks and barbarians.] It is remarkable that Dr. Barrow adds, this must include living peaceably with Heriticks and Schismaticks; *Barrow's Works,* Vol. I. p. 278; however, the ill treatment which must be expected under these hard names from men of unpeaceable tempers should never lead any to deny, or slight, what they in their consciences judge the truth of doctrine, or purity of worship.

d *Give*

wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

enemy[d]; *for* God hath forbidden us to indulge any of the vindictive passions: as *it is written*, (Deut. xxxii. 35,) *Vengeance* [*is*] *mine*, that is it properly belongs to me, and *I will recompense* the deserved punishment, *saith the Lord.* And indeed it requires the wisdom, as well as the dignity and majesty, of a God, to claim, and manage it aright. *Therefore*, instead of bearing any thoughts of hurting them that have used you most unkindly and unjustly, *if thine enemy hunger, feed him*, and *if he thirst, give him drink*; and on the whole, do him all the good in thy power, as Solomon urgeth, (Prov. xxv. 21;) *for by doing this thou shalt*, as it were, *heap coals of fire on his head*[e]: thou wilt touch him so sensibly, that he will no more be able to stand against such a conduct, than to bear on his head burning coals; but will rather submit to seek thy friendship, and endeavour by future kindness to overbalance the injury.

SECT. XXVIII.

Rom. XII. 19.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

20

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

On all occasions, act on this as an inviolable maxim; and if you do not find the immediate good effect, persist in such a conduct; *be not overcome with evil*; where it seems most obstinate, *but overcome evil with good*; for that is the most glorious victory, and a victory which may certainly be obtained, if you will have the courage to adhere to that, which, being good, is always in its own nature, on the whole, invincible, to whatever present disadvantage it may seem obnoxious.

21

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY if any thing consistent with the burdens and sorrows of mortal life can inspire constant joy, it must be the *Christian hope*; the *hope* of our *calling*. Surely with a joy thus supported, no tribulation can be too great to be endured with patience;

Ver. 12

d *Give place to wrath.*] L'Enfant and others explain this of *giving way to the wrath of God*, and quote the phrase of *giving place to the physician*, (Ecclus. xxxviii. 12,) and *giving place to the law*, (chap. xix. 17,) as authorizing that interpretation. But I think, in both those passages, *to give place* signifies to *yield* without opposing; in which sense it best suits the interpretation given in the *paraphrase*, which seems most natural. The ingenious and learned Dr. *Balguy* determines in favour of the *other* interpretation, (*Balguy's Serm.* Vol. II. p. 222, 223,) though the force of the reason that follows is not at all impaired by *ours*.

e *Thou shalt heap*, &c.] The sense cannot be, *thou shalt consume him*, and bring judgments upon him; for that would be applying to revenge, and building upon it, while it is most expressly forbidden. It must therefore intimate, in how tender a manner human nature is affected with favours received from one who has been considered as an enemy.

SECT. XXVIII.

ence; yea, with *cheerfulness;* since, whatever it be, the glorious Object of our hope, far from being endangered or diminished by it, shall rather be secured and increased. Let us therefore *continue instant in prayer,* that our minds may be so fortified and ennobled that we may dwell upon these views.

Well may they keep the heart in so serene and pleasant a state, as to make us ready to every act of kindness to our fellow-creatures; but especially to those who are heirs with us of this hope; whom we ought to esteem it our great honour and privilege to be able in any measure to assist and accommodate, while they are travelling through this too often inhospitable wilderness, in the way to that kingdom they are going to receive. It is no wonder, that as *we are not of this world, but are chosen* and called *out of the world* to so glorious a prospect, the *world should hate* and persecute us: but let us neither be dismayed, nor in any degree exasperated, with the ill usage we may meet with. Rather, with unfeigned compassion and good-will to the most injurious of our enemies, let us not only refrain from repaying *evil with evil,* but render them blessing for curses, and benefits for wrongs: since we have ourselves found such mercy, and *are called to inherit such a blessing.*

Ver. 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, &c., 21

Let us cultivate those kind and *social affections* which this great proficient in them all so forcibly inculcates;—that tender *sympathy* which may teach us to share in the joys and sorrows of all about us—that candid *humility,* which shall, with graceful unaffected freedom, stoop to the lowest and the meanest, and while it stoops, rise in unsought honours,—that *distrust of ourselves,* which shall cause us to *cease from our own wisdom,* that we may repose ourselves upon the unerring guidance of our heavenly Father,—that kindly obstinate attachment to *peace,* that heroic superiority, which *melts down* with kindness the heart that but a little before was glowing with rage. And on the whole, that resolute *perseverance in goodness,* which must be finally victorious, and will assuredly rise with a new accession of strength and glory, from every seeming defect.

SECT. XXIX.

The Apostle urges obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, and love, as the fulfilling of the law: concluding the chapter with a warm exhortation to that universal sanctity which might become and adorn, the excellent dispensation of the gospel. Rom. XIII. 1, *to the end.*

SECT. XXIX. Rom. XIII. 1.

ROMANS XIII. 1.

AMONG the many exhortations I am now giving you, my Christian brethren, to a life worthy

ROMANS XIII. 1.

LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers

powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

worthy of the gospel, that of obedience to magistrates, to which I now proceed, must be acknowledged of distinguished importance. I know the Jews are strongly prejudiced against the thoughts of submitting to heathen governors; but *let* me strictly charge and enjoin it upon *every soul* among you, without exception, how holy soever his profession be, and however honourable his station in the church, that he *be in* all regular and orderly *subjection to the superior* civil *authorities* which Divine Providence hath established in the places where you live. *For there is no* such legal *authority, but* may, in one sense or another, be said to be *from God.* It is his will, that there should be magistrates to guard the peace of societies; and the hand of his providence in directing to the persons of particular governors, ought to be seriously considered and revered *The authorities that exist* under one form or another, *are* in their different places, ranged, *disposed*, and established *by God*[a], the original and universal Governor. *He therefore, who,* by an unjust resistance, endeavours to confound these ranks, and *sets himself,* as it were, in array[b] *against the authority* of which magistrates are possessed[c], *withstands the disposition of God,* for the public peace and order: *and they who withstand* so wise and beneficial an appointment, *shall receive to themselves condemnation,*

SECT XXIX.

Rom. XIII. 1.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive

2

a *Disposed* and established.] So I render the word τάγμασι, thinking the English word *ordained* rather too strong. Compare Acts xiii. 48, and the *note there.* Divine Providence *ranges,* and in fact *establishes,* the various governments of the world; they are, therefore, under the character of governments, in the general to be revered: but this cannot make what is wrong and pernicious in any particular forms, sacred, divine, and immutable, any more than the hand of God in a *famine* or *pestilence,* is an argument against seeking proper means to remove it.

b *Sets himself,* &c.] This seems the most direct import of ἀντιτασσόμενος, which may allude to the word τάγμασι, *ranged* or *marshalled* by God, used above with respect to the *magistrate,* ver. 1.

c *Authority* of which magistrates are possessed.] Bishop Hopkins lays great stress on the word ἐξουσια, here used, as signifying a *lawful authority,* and incapable of being applied to an *usurper;* and in pursuance of this, has taken some pains to shew, that the power of the *Roman emperors* in the *apostle's* time was not usurped, the *people* having given up their original rights to the *senate,* and the *senate* to the *emperors.* But as this is a very abstruse *question,* and the *pretended evidence* for it very *slender* and *exceptionable,* and so far as I can judge, quite unsatisfactory; so it is certain, that ἐξουσια is sometimes applied to an *usurped* authority, being applied to the *power of Satan.* Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. ii. 2. Compare Eph. vi. 12; Col. i. 13; chap. ii. 15; Rev. xiii. 2, 4, 5; to which several other instances might be added. But the natural and candid interpretation proposed above, needs not the support of such a *criticism,* and frees us from the endless embarrassment of the question of a king *de Jure* and *de facto.* I should think it unlawful to resist the most unjust power that can be imagined, if there was a probability only of doing mischief by it.

d *Are*

SECT. XXIX.

nation, not only from the civil powers they injure, but from the supreme Sovereign, whose laws they break, and whose order they endeavour to reverse.

receive to themselves damnation.

Rom. XIII. 2.

3 And indeed the good purposes to which magistracy is subservient, make it very apparent, that God must be displeased when that is despised: *for rulers*, in their several offices, *are not* on the whole *a terror to good works, but to* such as are *evil*[d], being intended to encourage the former, by punishing the latter. *Wouldest thou not therefore be afraid of the* high *authority* with which they are invested? *Do that which is good, and thou shalt*, according to the general course of administration, *have* not only protection, but *praise* and respect *from it*[e]. This, I say, may reasonably be expected, and will be the case, where the magistrate understands himself and his office: *for he is*, according to the original appointment, to be considered as elevated above his fellow-men, not for his own indulgence, dominion, and advantage, but that he might be *to thee*, and to all the rest of his subjects, as *the servant* and instrument *of God for* thine and the 4 public *good*. *But if thou dost* that which is *evil*, and so makest thyself the enemy of that society of which he is the guardian, thou hast indeed reason to *be afraid; for he holdeth not the sword* of justice, which God hath put into his hand, *in vain*[f]. It was given him *for* this very pur-

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same;

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be

d *Are not a terror to good works*, &c.] If circumstances arise in which this argument is not applicable, it is reasonably to be taken for granted, that the *apostle* did not intend here to pronounce concerning such cases. Nothing can be said for interpreting these passages in favour of *unlimited passive obedience*, which will not prove any resistance of a private injury unlawful, by the authority of our *Lord's* decision, Mat. v. 39, 40 And this would subvert the great foundation of *magistracy* itself, which is appointed by force to ward off and prevent it, or avenge such injuries. But it was very prudent in the *apostle* not to enter into any *question* relating to the right of *resistance* in some extraordinary cases; as those cases are comparatively few, and as the justest decisions which could have been given on that subject might possibly have been misrepresented, to his own detriment, and that of the *gospel*. The general laws of benevolence to the whole, so strongly asserted in this context, are in particular cases to determine; and all particular precepts, in whatever universal terms they are delivered, are always to give way to them.

e In the general course of administration, &c.] As it is certain the case often is otherwise, and was particularly so with respect to Nero, under whom this *epistle* was written; it is necessary to interpret the words with this latitude. And there is great reason to conclude, *that magistrates in general are in fact much more beneficial, than hurtful, to society*, which is a good argument for a general submission; and that was, as we observed above, all the *apostle* could intend to inforce. Compare Prov. xviii. 22, where, if I mistake not, the sense is similar, and is to be understood thus, "generally speaking, a wife is a felicity, rather than a detriment to her husband, though to be sure there are many excepted instances."

f *Holdeth not the sword in vain.*] This strongly intimates the lawfulness of inflicting

be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doth evil.

purpose, that he might smite malefactors, and thereby preserve peace and order in his dominions. And in doing it, *he is* to be regarded, not as acting a severe and oppressive part, but as *the servant* and substitute *of God; an avenger* appointed in his name, *to* [*execute,*] not his own personal resentment, but the *wrath* of a righteous providence, *against him that doth evil,* in instances wherein it would be highly improper to leave that avenging power in the hands of private injured persons. *Therefore,* when this is considered, piety, as well as prudence, and human virtue, will teach thee, that *it is necessary to be in* a regular *subjection, not only out of regard to* the dread thou mayest reasonably have of that *wrath* and punishment which man can execute; *but also for the sake of conscience,* which will be violated, and armed with reproaches against you, if you disturb the public peace, resist the kind purposes of God, by opposing governors, while they act under his commission. This is in effect, what all subjects profess to own, as *on this account you also pay tribute;* which magistrates every-where receive, and is levied *for* this apparent reason, that *they are* to be considered as *the ministers* of the good providence *of God,* who give to the public the whole of their time, care, and labour, and *continually applying themselves to this one affair,* the execution of their high office, have a right to be honourably maintained out of the public revenues, on the most obvious principles of equity and justice.

SECT. XXIX.

Rom. XIII. 4.

5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

5

6 For, for this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

6

7 Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute *is*

On this principle, *therefore,* be careful that you *render to all* what is justly *their due;* even though you may have opportunities of defrauding them of it, to your own immediate and temporal advantage. *To whom tribute* [*is due,*] for your persons or estates, [*render*] such *tribute,* or taxes[g]; and *to whom custom* is due, for any commodity exported, or imported, render that *custom;* and seek not clandestinely to convey such commodities away, without paying it. *To whom*

7

ing *capital punishment,* which to deny is subverting the chief use of *magistracy.*

g *Tribute to whom tribute.*] It is well known that the Jews had a favourite notion among them, that they, as the peculiar *people* of God, were exempted from obligations to pay *tribute* to Gentiles; (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 1; *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 1, § 2, *& cap.* 8, (al. 7,) § 1;) against which this *passage* is directly levelled, though without pointing them out in any invidious manner.

h *Reverence.*]

SECT. XXIX.

whom reverence is due[h], on account of their worth and character, render *reverence*; and *to whom* any external form of civil *honour* and respect is due, by virtue of their office and rank of life, though it should so happen that they have no peculiar merit to recommend them to your regard, scruple not to pay all proper marks of *honour*; and guard against that stiffness, which, under pretence of Christian simplicity, by disputing such common forms, may rather indulge pride, and occasion reproach. On the whole, *owe nothing to any, but* endeavour to manage your affairs with that œconomy and prudent attention, that you may as soon as possible balance accounts with all who have demands upon you, except it be with respect to that debt, which, while you pay, you will be renewing; I mean, the obligation you will ever be under *to love one another.* That I would recommend to your constant care; *for he that loveth another, hath* in a compendious manner *fulfilled* every thing that *the law* requireth with respect to him. *For that* [*precept,*] *Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness* against thy neighbour, *Thou shalt not covet* any thing that is thy neighbour's, *and any other command* respecting our fellow-creatures, *if such* [*there be,*] *is summed up in this* one excellent and comprehensive *precept*, which I wish may be engraven on all our hearts, so as to regulate every affection and action; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Thou shalt learn to put thyself, as it were, in his place, and to act as, in a supposed change of circumstances, thou couldest reasonably desire to be treated. Now it is very obvious, that *love worketh no evil to one's neighbour*; nay, wherever that noble principle governs, it will put men upon doing all they can, to ward off injury from one another, and to make the life of each as comfortable and happy as possible: *therefore* it may well be said, as it is asserted above, that *love* [*is*] *the accomplishment of the* whole *law.*

And let me urge you to attend to *this*, and to the other precepts I have given, with so much the greater

Rom. XIII. 7.

8 9 10 11

is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

11 And that, knowing

h *Reverence.*] This must certainly be the *import* of φοβον here, as also, of φοβηλαι, Eph. v. *ult.* and it expresses the *inward disposition*, as τιμη, *honour*, expresses the conduct and external behaviour, proceeding from it.

Let

ing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

greater diligence, *knowing the* circumstances of the present *season;* which, if you consider, you will see *that* [*it is*] *high time now to awake out of sleep,* and vigorously to improve every opportunity of doing good, and prosecuting the great business of life, which is to secure the Divine favour, and your final happiness: *for our* great expected *salvation* [*is*] *now* considerably *nearer than when we* at first *believed.* We have complete salvation in view, it is continually advancing upon us, flying forwards, as it were, on the swiftest wings of time; and that which remains, interposed between the present moment, and our entering on the promised reward, is comparatively but a very small span. Act therefore at all times, in a holy subordination to such a circumstance! And since *the night is far advanced,* since the dark state of the present life, in which we often confound good and bad, is almost over, and *the day is drawing near,* even that day which will shew every thing in its proper colours and forms; *let us therefore put off the works,* which suit only a state *of darkness, and* let us *put on the* complete *armour of light.* Let us be cloathed with all the Christian graces, which like burnished and beautiful armour, will be at once an ornament and defence, and which will reflect the bright beams that are so gloriously rising upon us. *And as* [*being*] now *in the* clear and open *day, let us* take care to *walk* decently, *honourably,* and gracefully[i]; since the lustre, already shining about us, requires great reformation and exemplary holiness: *not in rioting and drunken debauches, not in chambering*[k], effeminacy, *and lasciviousness*[l]; the vices in which so many are wasting and polluting the hours which nature has destined to necessary

SECT. XXIX.

Rom. XIII. 11.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 12

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 13

i Let us walk *honourably* and gracefully.] So ευσχημονως exactly signifies. Dr. *Milner* renders it, let us walk *with a grace. Fading Flowers of Life,* p. 38.

k *Chambering:* Κοιταις.] This Leigh explains of *lying long in bed.* I will not defend that sense of the word; but I will here record the *observation* which I have found of great use to myself, and to which I may say, that the production of this work, and most of my other writings, is owing; viz. that the difference between rising at 5, and at 7 of the clock in the morning, for the space of forty years, supposing a man to go to bed at the same hour at night, is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to a man's life, of which, (supposing the 2 hours in question to be so spent,) 8 hours every day should be employed in study and devotion.

l Effeminacy *and lasciviousness.*] I think ασελγεια, properly signifies a *soft, luxurious, and effeminate manner of life,* attended with an affected *delicacy* very detrimental to that *resolution* which is so necessary an ingredient in the character of one who would approve himself a *good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

SECT. XXIX.

Rom. XIII. 14.

necessary repose: *not in* the *contention and emulation* which the indulgence of such irregular desires often occasion. *But* laying aside all these abominations and enormities, let us *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*[m], our great Sovereign and Saviour. Endeavour, my brethren, to obtain the greatest conformity to his temper, and to appear as like him as possible, in every particular in which he can be the object of our imitation; for that short precept will contain all that is necessary to adorn our profession to its greatest height. *And* while so many are spending their time, and thoughts, and substance, in those low pursuits which regard only the meaner part of their nature; *make not* a solicitous *provision for the flesh, to* [*fulfil its*] irregular desires, nor be intent in pleasing any of the senses, even where their demands may not appear directly criminal; but labour to preserve the superiority of the immortal spirit, and to keep it continually under the discipline of so holy, and so noble a religion.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1—5

WHILE *subjects* learn reverence and obedience to their magistrates, *not only for wrath, but for conscience sake*, may *magistrates* learn a correspondent care to answer that end of their office, which the apostle makes the foundation of such precepts as these,

3, 4

and to be indeed the *ministers of God for good*, a *terror not to good but to evil works*.

GREAT BRITAIN, while I write this *, is happy in a government to which this character may justly be applied. Its subjects are under the greatest obligations to the Divine goodness, in having so remarkably overthrown the attempts of those who would have left us little use of the *scripture*; but would themselves have abused it, to have rivetted on the heaviest fetters, by perverting this passage of St. Paul, as if he had intended to subvert every free constitution under heaven, and to put a sword into the hand

m *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*] A strong expression for endeavouring to be cloathed with all the *virtues* and *graces* which composed his character. Which reminds me of what *Plutarch* tells us concerning the *kings of Persia*; that on their coronation-day, they put on a robe, which the first Cyrus wore before he was king, to remind them of imitating his exemplary temper and behaviour. *Plutarch. Artaxerx. apud Opera, Tom.* vi. p. 1851. *Edit. Steph.* 1572. It is observable, the *apostle* does not say, "put on *purity*, and *sobriety*, *peacefulness*, and *benevolence*;" but he, in effect, says all at once, in saying, *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.

* *Anno Domini*, 1749.

hand of merciless tyrants, to kill and take possession of the heritage of the Lord, counting his people but *as sheep for the slaughter.* SECT. XXIX.

While we are thus happy, we shall be doubly inexcusable, if we fail in rendering both *honour* and *tribute*, where they are so justly due. 7

May we extend our care to the universal *law of love*, and may it be so deeply engraven on our hearts, that the practice of every social virtue may become easy and delightful. 8—10

And on the whole, being animated by the *approach of salvation*, may we awake to the vigorous discharge of our duty, and while the light of the gospel scatters about us so bright a ray, may we walk, in every respect, worthy of it, that we may have no reason to wish for the veil of darkness to cover our shame. May we not only abstain from the vices, which are here branded with the infamy they deserve; but distinguish ourselves in cultivating the contrary virtues. And that we may do it effectually, may we *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, remembering continually the obligations we are under to consider his life as the model of our own. So shall we make the gospel day yet brighter in the eyes of all around us, and anticipate, while we are here in this world of comparative darkness, the lustre, with which we hope, through his influence and grace, to *shine forth in* the celestial *kingdom of our Father.* 11, 12 13 14

SECT. XXX.

The apostle recommends mutual candour; especially between those christians who did, and those who did not, think themselves obliged in conscience to observe the ceremonies enjoined by Moses; and strenuously attempts to turn their zeal for, or against, those observances, into a concern to prepare for their final appearance before the great tribunal. Rom. XIV. 1—12.

ROMANS XIV. 1.

HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

ROMANS XIV. 1.

I KNOW there are different opinions among you christians at Rome, with regard to the obligations of the Mosaic ritual. Now here, I would be solicitous to suggest the most peaceful councils, and to persuade you to mutual forbearance, and mutual love. As for *him that is* so *weak in the* christian *faith*, as still to retain the prejudices of a Jewish education on this head, let me prevail on you, Gentile believers, in this respect better instructed in the nature and extent of christian liberty, to *receive* and converse with him, in a friendly and respectful manner: and SECT. XXX. Rom. XIV. 1.

SECT. XXX.

Rom. XIV. 2.

and do *not* indulge yourselves in the inclination which you may sometimes find, *to* run into *debates* and distinctions *about matters in doubt* between you [a]. *For one*, that is, the converted Gentile, *believeth* very truly and rightly, *that he may eat all things* indifferently that are good for food; but *another*, *who is* in this respect *weak*, *eateth* nothing but *herbs*, and other vegetables [b], to express his humility and self-denial, and to guard against the pollution that might attend even the use of clean animals for food, if they are not killed and prepared after the Jewish manner. Now in this diversity of opinion and practice, exercise candour and forbearance to each other, and all will be well. *Let not him that eateth* all kinds of flesh freely, *despise* and set at nought *him that eateth not* those prohibited or suspicious things, as if he were a weak and superstitious bigot: *and let not him that eateth* them *not*, but conscientiously abstains from them, *judge* and condemn *him that eateth* them, as a profane, unclean, and intemperate person. *For God hath received him* into the number of his children and people, without laying him under such restraints; and surely where God receives, we should not presume to reject.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Let me ask thee seriously on this occasion, whoever thou mayest be, and how wise and holy

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?

a *Debates*, and distinctions, *about matters in doubt*.] Dr. Whitby explains διακρισεις, of *discriminating persons* according to their *inward thoughts and reasonings* on these heads. The force of the *apostle's* admirable reasoning in favour of candour, and *mutual condescension*, cannot be enervated by saying, as some have unhappily done, that here was no separation between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Had the things judged indifferent by the latter, and apprehended sinful by the former, been imposed, a separation of communion must have ensued, and the schism on the *apostle's* principles would have been chargeable on the imposers. When it shall please God to awaken *in the governors of established protestant churches*, such a spirit of moderation and goodness, joined with a true zeal for religion, as to leave such things in that natural state of indifference, in which almost all sensible men *confess it is best they should be left*; many *separations* will cease of course, and the healers of such breaches will do a noble service to their country, be honoured by all that love christianity, and amply rewarded by the great head of the church.

b *Eateth herbs*.] Dr. Whitby demonstrates, by many learned quotations here, that some of the Jews used to eat no flesh at all, and others looked upon it as a very high pitch of virtue, to abstain from it in Gentile countries, and to subsist entirely on vegetables; because they did not know, but any flesh sold in the shambles might have been offered to idols, or at least contracted some other ceremonial *pollutions*. Mr. Baxter thinks here is a reference to such christians as might have been Pythagoreans before their conversion, and might retain their old prejudices against *animal food*, *Baxter's Works*, Vol. IV. p. 614. But as that aversion to animal food depended on their doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which no christian could retain, I think, that interpretation is much preferable, which refers it to Jewish *converts*, who were also much more numerous in the *church*, and possibly might some of them come from the Essenes, a Jewish sect peculiarly strict on this head so that they abstained, not only from *flesh*, but from *fruit*.

c *God*

servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

holy soever thou mayest think thyself, *Who art thou that judgest the servant of another?* Wouldst thou think it an indecent thing to meddle with the domestic servant of thy neighbour, or of thy friend, and wilt thou pretend to govern Christ's family, and judge of his administration towards the members of it? Know, that not to thee, but *to his own Master he standeth, or falleth:* it is by Christ he is to be finally acquitted or condemned. *Yea*, if he offends in no greater points than these in debate amongst you, *he shall be upheld*, in his christian profession, and established to eternal salvation; *for God is able to establish him* [c], and his promises assure us that he will do it.

SECT. XXX

Rom. XIV. 4.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

What I have said with relation to the distinction of meats, may also be applied to that of days. *One man*, that is, the Jewish convert, *esteemeth one day above another* [d]. He thinks their sabbaths and new-moons, and yearly fasts or feasts have something inviolably sacred, and that the observation of them is matter of perpetual and universal obligation. *Another*, educated among the Gentiles, or more thoroughly instructed in the design and genius of Christianity, *esteemeth every day* [*alike*] without any regard at all to the Jewish institution. *Let every man freely enjoy his own sentiment* [e], and go on in his own way, without impediment or censure. For we may reasonably hope, that christians are acted, in the main, by the same principles, when their practices differ according to the difference of their judgment; so that *he that regardeth a day* in this peculiar manner, *regardeth* [*it*] *to the Lord*, and takes this distinguishing notice of it, because he thinks it is the will of Christ that an honour should still be

5

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that

6

[c] *God is able to establish him.*] Dr. Whitby explains this of God's convincing the Jewish converts in general, of the indifferency of the Mosaic ritual, by putting a speedy period to the very possibility of observing it in the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem; which would have a peculiar efficacy to wean men's minds from an attachment to it, when considered in connection with Christ's predictions of that event. But I choose the more extensive interpretation, as more obvious, and less liable to objection.

[d] *Esteemeth one day above another.*] Raphelius here produces some apposite passages to shew that κρίνειν in such a construction signifies *to prefer*.

[e] *Let every man freely enjoy his own sentiment.*] Critics have observed that the word πληροφορεισθαι is most properly applied to a *ship*, which is carried on by the wind and tide, with all its sails spread, to forward it, and nothing to obstruct it; and so the meaning is, *let him go on in his own way, without impediment*. How strong a *text* this is for the right of private judgment, I need take no pains to shew: but the *reader* may see it vindicated from the *evasions* of a very celebrated writer, in Mr. *Bennet's Appendix to his Irenicum*, p. 120—124.

SECT. XXX.

be done to those Mosaic institutions: *and* on the other hand, *he that regards not a day*, it is *to the Lord*, we hope, that *he doth not regard [it,]* it is because he thinks Christ will be honoured, by asserting the liberty of his followers in this respect. *He that eateth* freely of whatever comes before him, *eateth to the Lord*, endeavours to glorify him for it, as becomes a good christian *and giveth God thanks* for the various provision of his liberal providence; *and he that eateth not* the food which the law forbids, may act on the same pious principles, and we ought charitably to conclude, that it is out of a regard *to* what he apprehends the will of *the Lord*, that *he eateth* it *not*; he cheerfully denies himself what he supposes Christ would have him forbear; *and he* likewise *giveth God thanks* that other food is provided on which he may conveniently subsist, and that he is not forced to eat what he thinks unclean, out of absolute necessity. Now where is the damage of all this, and while such a religious temper towards God prevails, how little does it comparatively signify, whether it acts by the use of these things, or by a conscientious abstinence from them?

Rom. XIV. 6.

that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7 It may well be supposed that this is a just representation of the case: *for* it is certainly what every christian is obliged to, by virtue of our common profession; as *none of us*, who understands and answers that engagement, *liveth to himself; and none of us*, so far as the circumstances of his death are under the direction of his own choice, *dieth to himself*, nor determines the most important affairs by his own humour, 8 or present interest. *But* from the time of our giving up our names to Christ, as our Divine Master, to the last day and hour of our continuance in life, *if we live*, it is our concern that *we* may *live to the Lord*, and strenuously pursue the great purposes of his glory; *or* that *if we die, we* may *die unto the Lord*, either by sacrificing our lives to his gospel, if he demands it of us; or, if we expire in a natural way, by behaving to the last, as those who have his love ruling in our hearts, and his sacred cause still in our eye: *so that whether we live or die, we are the Lord's;* in consequence of being thus faithfully devoted to Christ, both in life and death, we have the pleasure to think, that living or dying, we are the objects of his care and favour.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

vour. *For to this purpose Christ both died and rose again* from the dead, *and* still *continues alive, that he might be* the sovereign *Lord, both of the dead and of the living.* This is the reward bestowed upon him for all his services, as Mediator; that he should be exalted to such a kingdom, and that all Christians should thus own themselves his servants; not only in this present world, but in that unchangeable state into which they pass by death; yea, that all the inhabitants of both worlds, should be ever subject to his disposal and command.

Rom. XIV. 9.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

But the thought of Christ's exaltation furnishes another argument for the candid temper I am now recommending, as it implies his future appearance to the universal judgment, where our temper, in this respect, will be strictly reviewed. In this light then, let me seriously ask, *why dost thou,* O Jewish convert, *judge thy* Gentile *brother,* for the non-observation of those precepts by which thou thinkest thyself bound? *Or why dost thou,* O Gentile believer, *set at naught* and deride, as weak or superstitious, *thy* Jewish *brother,* who conscientiously observes that burdensome ritual from which thou art so happy as to apprehend thyself free? This censoriousness or contempt is greatly to be blamed, and either must very ill become the state in which we are, and must quickly be: *for* no principle of our common faith is more certain than this, that *we must all* at length *appear,* and be solemnly presented *before the tribunal of Christ:* and as it is there that we are all to take our final trial, it must be dangerous presumption to anticipate that judgment. Remember it, my brethren, and ponder seriously upon that awful day; for it will assuredly come, *as it is written,* (Isa. xlv. 23,) "[*As*] *I live saith the Lord, surely every knee shall bow unto me, and every tongue shall confess to God;*" and it is then only, that such a great and extensive prophecy shall be completely accomplished: *So that every one of us shall render an account of himself to God.* Let each of us therefore apply it to his own case, and say to his heart, "This account must be mine." And we shall then be too intent on regulating our own conduct, to have either leisure or inclination, to be severe, or pragmatical, in censuring that of our brethren.

11 For it is written, *As* I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XXX.

LET all the different sects and parties of *Christians* study to imbibe more of the equitable and lovely temper which the
Ver. 1, &c. apostle here expresses in so genuine a manner. The divisions of the *church* are not to be healed by imposing our own sentiments, phrases, and forms, and censuring and harrassing those that will not acquiesce in them. Such a temper will only ingender strife, and mutual provocations will produce mutual increasing resentment.

Let us *receive our weaker brethren* with tenderness and respect; not despising those who scruple what we practise, not judging those who practise what we scruple. *God* may receive the one and the other: yea, the different practices of both may proceed from the same general principles, a desire to please him, and to approve ourselves in his sight.

In this we may all unite, in a concern that we may not *live, or die to ourselves,* but to *Christ.* His dying love, his living care,
7, 8, 9 may surely challenge this. Worthy is he who *died, and rose again, and revived,* to be adored and obeyed, as *the Lord, both of the dead and of the living.* And such, in one view or another, he will
10 finally appear. We shall know it in that day when we shall be called before his *judgment-seat.* Conscious of so many crimes, and, even in our best days, of so many imperfections, how shall we dare to appear before him; especially, if we should then receive *judgment without mercy.* Let us not tempt it, to our own everlasting confusion, by shewing *no mercy.*

Let us not add, to all the offences which may justly cause us to tremble before his tribunal, the criminal arrogance of usurping the place and prerogative of our Judge. Let us remember our relation to him, and to each other, and act in a manner be-
12 coming it. Let us diligently *judge ourselves* as those who must be *judged of the Lord;* so thinking of that grand account, as with an increasing solicitude to prepare for it. *The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day!* The Lord grant that it may also be imparted to many of our brethren, who have differed most from us; yea, and through the indulgence of our compassionate Saviour, to many who have been prone to censure and condemn us for those things which he knows we have done from a desire to please him, or refused to do from a fear of offending him!

SECT.

SECT. XXXI.

The Apostle farther urges the mutual tenderness and candour he had recommended above, by representing the love of Christ to all Christians, the nature and design of his religion, and the danger of a contrary temper. Rom. XIV. 13, *to the end.*

ROMANS XIV. 13.

LET us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

ROMANS XIV. 13.

SECT. XXXI.

Rom. XIV. 13.

I HAVE just been reminding you of your appearance before the tribunal of Christ, and the account which every man must render of himself there: and now give me leave a little farther to pursue the consequence which so naturally follows. *Let us not therefore any longer judge another*[a], *but rather judge ye*, and determine *this*, as matter of undoubted and important duty, *not to lay any stumbling block or scandal before a brother*[b]: to do nothing, how indifferent soever it may be in itself, which may tend to prejudice, discourage, or mislead any other Christian.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there* is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

I know, for instance, *and am* at length *persuaded, by* the powerful teaching of *the Lord Jesus Christ*, though it be so contrary to the principles I imbibed in my education, and so strenuously maintained in my Pharisaical state, *that nothing* [*is*] *unclean of itself:* that there is no moral turpitude, in any kind of food, by which the human body may be nourished; but that, separate from particular circumstances which may arise, it may lawfully be eaten; there is nothing, I say, unclean, *unless it be*] *to him that* in his conscience *accounteth any thing to be unclean:* [*and to him,*] while he retaineth that opinion, [*it is*] indeed *unclean*, how indifferent soever it is in itself; and he will contract guilt before God, by allowing himself in it, whether it be to indulge his own taste, or to engage the favour of others, whilst he hath this inward apprehension 14

a *Let us not* therefore *any longer judge one another.*] It is very plain that the word κρινειν, is here used in two very different *senses*, as *Raphelius* on this *text* shews φασιαζειν is used, in the same *sentence*, by Herodotus.

b *A stumbling-block.*] Some say that σκανδαλον, properly signifies "a piece of wood that supports a trap, which falls, on its being moved," and so may with peculiar propriety signify *whatever may be the occasion of ensnaring another, and drawing him into sin and mischief.*

c *If*

ACT. XXXI.

Rom. XIV. 15.

apprehension of its being unlawful. *But* if there should not be such an apprehension concerning the thing in itself considered, yet it may be in effect prohibited to thee, as injurious to others; for *if thy brother be grieved* [c], wounded, and led into sin, *by* [*thy*] use of *meat, how dost thou* any longer *walk according to* that noble principle *of love* which I have just now been so earnestly recommending? How innocent soever it may in itself seem, O *do not*, if thou hast any bowels for him, or any regard for thy great Master, *destroy him by thy* rash and unkind use of such particular *meat, for whom Christ*, not only submitted to smaller instances of self-denial, but *died* in the agonies of the cross. Is a morsel of meat indeed, so great a thing to a Christian, that for the sake of it an immortal soul should be endangered, and the blood of a Redeemer injured? *Let not then your* liberty, which is in itself *good, be slandered* and blamed, for being the occasion of so much mischief, as such an ill use of it may probably produce. And surely none of you can pretend to object any thing from conscience, against abstaining from these things. *For the kingdom of God*, into which we are entered by believing in Christ, and becoming his subjects, *consists not in meat and drink;* it neither prohibits nor enjoins such things as these, nor is taken up with such little matters; *but* the great design of it is to regulate the temper of its professors, and *in* the most effectual manner to cultivate and promote *righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, that is, a cheerful temper, supported by a consciousness of strict integrity, established on principles of universal love, and inspired by the blessed Spirit of God [d]. *And he that in these things* faithfully *serveth Christ*, and acts upon the great maxims of his religion, [*is*] *acceptable to God*, whether he abstains from the liberties in question, or allows himself in them: *and* he will also be in the main *approved by men* too; for bad as the world is, upright and benevolent men, who put on no affected rigour and severities in religion,

15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken:

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ, *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

c *If thy brother be grieved.*] Hence it appears, that *grieving a person* does not signify merely *putting him out of humour*, but *leading him into sin*. The *grief* therefore is that which arises from a *consciousness of having acted amiss*, in conformity to the example of a *person*, considered as *superior*, whether in *rank* or *genius, knowledge* or *piety*.

d A cheerful temper, &c.] This is the interpretation which Dr. *Scott* has given, in his *Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 285; and I think, on the whole, preferable to any *other*.

religion, are generally esteemed and beloved in it. Thus *let us therefore* act, and with all possible diligence *pursue the things which tend to peace, and* may promote our *mutual edification* in our common faith. And whoever thou art, that mayest disrelish the exhortation, in this connection, *do not* indulge so mean a taste, as *for the sake of* this or that particular kind of *meat*, to *destroy* thy brother; who, as a man, would appear *the* noblest *work of God*, in this lower world, if all the peculiar considerations of Christianity were out of the question. It is true *indeed*, and I hinted above, that in themselves *all things* [*are*] *pure; yet* [*that is*] morally *evil to a man, that he eateth with offence* and scandal; contrary to the rule of his own conscience, and ensnaring to that of others. In this view I may venture to say, [*it is*] *good neither to eat* any kind of *flesh*, though that would be a much more rigorous self-denial than I am now pleading for; *nor* even *to drink wine*, though in the most moderate degree; *nor* indeed to indulge in [*any thing*] else, *by which thy brother is scandalized or weakened*, that is, by which he may either be ensnared, or discouraged, in his religious course.

Thou wilt perhaps plead, that *thou hast faith* in a superior exercise, and beholdest Christianity in a more extensive and generous view. It is well; and I could not wish thy views should be more contracted. But if thou hast such a just persuasion of the indifference of these things, which others scruple; yet in circumstances like these, which I here suppose, *have it to thyself before God:* content thyself that he is witness to it, and conceal those apprehensions, just as they may be, in thine own breast, when they cannot be published with advantage, or without offence. But permit me to add, upon this occasion, *happy* [*is*] *he who doth not condemn himself in the thing which he alloweth:* it is a happy thing for a man, to be quite easy in what he does, and free, not only from the reproaches, but the suspicions of his conscience, and to use even lawful enjoyments only in a lawful and regular degree. *But he that* really in his conscience *maketh a difference* between one sort of food and another, *is condemned* by God as a sinner, *if he eat* out of unbridled appetite, vain complaisance, or weak shame. It must in such

Rom. XIV. 19.

19 Let us therefore follow after these things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

22 Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23 And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because *he eateth*

a

SECT. XXXI.

a case be criminal, *because* [*he eateth*] *not with faith*, that is, with a full satisfaction in his own mind, that God allows and approves the action.

eateth not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith, is sin.

Rom. XIV. 23. *For* it may be laid down as a general maxim in all these cases, that *whatsoever* [*is*] *not of faith, is sin*; since the Divine authority ought to be so sacred with every man, as to engage him, not only to avoid what is plainly and directly contrary to it, but what he apprehends, or even suspects, to be so; though that apprehension, or suspicion, should chance to be founded on his own ignorance or mistake.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12 STILL let that great and final *account* which each *must render of himself to God*, be kept in our mind; that we may learn obedience to him, candour to each other, and a tender care to avoid every thing that might give unnecessary offence to our brethren. And in the views of it, let us learn always to reverence our own consciences, so as never to be engaged to do what we suspect to be unlawful: since no consideration can ever balance the infinite evil of offending God, and bringing guilt on our own souls. *That* 14–23 *is* to us *unclean*, which we *esteem* to be *so*, and *what is not of faith, is sin.*

Let us also be cautious, that we do not incur guilt and *condemnation*, even by things *which we allow*, as in the main lawful; solicitously attending, not only to the general nature, but the probable consequences of our actions. And where there is dan- 15 ger of injuring the souls of others, let us often reflect, that *Christ died for them*; and estimate, so far as we can conceive it, the value of souls, by the value of that blood by which they were redeemed.

Let us also take great heed, that we do not give occasion to 16 others, by our imprudent conduct, *to speak evil of* that which is in itself *good*. And that we may not do it, let us study those great and generous notions of religion which this excellent passage of 17 scripture gives us. Let it be written upon our hearts, *that the kingdom of God is not meat or drink*, that it doth not consist in a zeal for, or against, any of the little distinctions by which *Christians* have been so often divided, and which have been too frequently the occasion of mutual alienation in their affections. 18 Let us study and practise more *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. The *approbation of God*, consequent on this, may well support us, though men should censure us as lukewarm; yea, perhaps as hypocritical, and interested too, in the candid regards

gards we shew to those which differ from each other, and from us. God will remember their rashness and forwardness to these uncharitable censures; but let us rather say, "May he cure and forgive them." SECT. XXXI. Ver. 18

Yet while we cultivate the amiable temper here set before us, bad as the world is, we may hope that we shall be *accepted* by many; and indeed, in proportion to this knowledge of our real character, by all whose acceptance and friendship is most to be valued. Let us not therefore be discouraged at any ill usage, which in particular instances we may meet with; but still *follow the things which make for peace*, and *conduce to mutual edification:* and *the God of peace will be with us*, and *Jesus*, the great *Lord of the church, which is his house*, will smile on our attempts to build it up into one united and beauteous edifice, till he calls us to his temple above, where all is order, and harmony, and love for ever. 19

SECT. XXXII.

The Apostle farther urges mutual condescension by new motives; particularly the example of Christ, and the goodness of God to us all, and the regard which Christ had shewn to Jews and Gentiles, in bringing or sending the gospel to them, according to the tenor of prophecies, which he adds to the list of those produced above. Rom. XV. 1—17.

ROMANS XV. 1.

WE then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

ROMANS XV. 1.

SEECING *therefore*, my brethren, it is so dangerous for any to do that concerning which they are not in their consciences satisfied that it is assuredly lawful; we ought to take great care, that we do not, by our uncharitable impositions, or irregular examples, lay a temptation in their way to do it. And *we who are strong*, that is, who perfectly understand the liberty which Christianity gives to its professors, *ought*, with all tender sympathy and compassion, *to bear the infirmities of the weak*, not only tolerating them, but in some instances restraining our own inclinations, out of regard to their advantage, *and not* as too many do, *to please ourselves*, to gratify our own inclinations and humours, whether others be comforted or grieved, edified or ensnared. On the contrary, *let every one of us* rather make it his care, so far as he lawfully and conveniently can, to *please* [*his*] *neighbour*, SECT. XXXII. Rom. XV. 1. 2

2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for

SECT. XXXII.

neighbour, where it may be *for* [*his*] real *good*, and condescend even to his ignorance and prejudices, where there is reason to hope it may conduce *to* his *edification*, and that of the church; which is nearly interested in the mutual tenderness of its members for each other.

for *his* good to edification.

Rom. XV. 2.

3 And surely we must be disposed to act such a part towards our brethren; *for* we all well know, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our great and Divine Master, though so infinitely exalted above us, *pleased not himself; but*, when he vouchsafed in mercy to visit this low world of ours, instead of studying his own ease and pleasure, he submitted to an almost continual series of self-denial, mortification, and trouble, for our sakes. He considered the weakness and infirmities of those about him, that he might teach them, and train them up for service, as they were able to bear it. (Mark iv. 33.) Yea, he even submitted with the greatest gentleness, to much reproach and contempt; *as it is written*, (Psal. lxix. 9,) in words which may well be applied to him; "*The reproaches of those who reproached thee, are fallen upon me*[a]. I have placed myself in a world, where I have been afflicted with the wickedness of mankind, which I have continually seen and heard about me, and which has been through the whole course of my life, my continual grief and burden."

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

4 Now, by the way, I accommodate this text to the purpose before me, because I think, we may make the best we can of every scripture, to produce and cherish good dispositions, and pious sentiments in our hearts. *For whatever things were formerly written, were written for our instruction, that we through patience and consolation of the scriptures*, that is, by the strenuous exercise of

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

a *The reproaches of those*, &c.] Some *expositors* refer this to *Christ's* having undertaken by his *sufferings* to expiate the *guilt of sin*, every *species* of which may be considered as a *reproach* cast on the *law* and *government* of God. See *Cradoc in loc.* I have given what seemed to me the more direct and natural *sense*, but will not say this other should be excluded, which may well agree both with the *words* and *connection*. It must, on the principle on which the *apostle* goes in many of his quotations, be very pleasant to observe, how all the expressions of the highest piety and devotion, to be found in the *writings* or *discourses* of good men of old, are applicable to Christ. But many learned critics maintain, that the lxixth Psalm may, in its original sense, be interpreted as a prophecy of the Messiah. How inexpressible a grief and burden the sight of so much wickedness must have been to so pure and holy a mind, as that of our Lord, it is impossible for us fully to conceive; but were we more like him, we might, and we certainly should, enter more into it, than we generally do.

b *The*

of that patience which the consolations administered in scripture so powerfully support, *might have* an assured and joyful *hope* in the midst of all our tribulation. Rom. XV. 4.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus:

Now may the God of patience and consolation, 5 from whom all these gracious and seasonable provisions proceed, *give you* more of this blessed temper; that ye may have the *same mutual affection, according to* the example of *Jesus Christ*[b].

6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That with one mind [*and*] *one mouth,* with united hearts and voices, *ye may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* who hath sent his beloved Son into the world, to unite our hearts in love to each other, and to tune them to those devout praises which we address to his blessed self through him. 6

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Therefore, whether ye were, before your conversion to christianity, Jews or Gentiles, considering it now as an endearing bond, which causes every difference to be forgot, *receive ye one another,* and embrace one another, with mutual love; *as Christ hath,* without any distinction, *received us* all *to the glory of God.* And greatly will that sublime end, at which he aimed in all, even the glory of his heavenly Father, be promoted, by such endeared affection in his people towards each other. 7

8 Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers.

Now I say this, with peculiar regard to those differences in judgment which I know are so ready to prevail among christians of different educations, as to the obligation of the Mosaic law. And I would remind you Gentiles, *that* you ought not to suffer your hearts to be alienated from your Jewish brethren, for their attachment to it; because *Jesus Christ was* [*made*] *a minister of the circumcision;* as he was a Jew by birth, he received circumcision himself, in token of his obligation to observe the law; and confined his personal ministry, according to what he himself declared concerning the limitation of his embassy, (Mat. xv. 24,) to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And this was *for* the illustration of the *truth* and fidelity *of God, to confirm* and verify *the promises* so long since *made to* Abraham 8

b *The same mutual affection, according to* the example of *Jesus Christ.*] Raphelius has evidently shewn, that αυτο φρονειν signifies to agree in an harmonious and affectionate manner; and that the *preposition* κατα may be rendered *according to the example of.* Compare Gal. iv. 28; 1 Pet. i. 15; Eph. iv. 24. See *Raphel. Annot. ex. Herod. in loc.*

SECT. XXXII.

Abraham and *the* other *fathers* of that nation. *And* I would remind Jewish believers, that he also came *that* he might gather together all the children of God scattered abroad among *the Gentiles, that they might glorify God for* [*his*] *mercy*, in granting them a participation of the same privileges; and gave it in charge to the apostles, that they should raise disciples to him among all nations, (Mat. xxviii. 19.) So that it is a failure of love and duty to Christ, not to receive them. And accordingly the Gentiles are often spoken of in the Old Testament, as called to join with the Jews, in worshipping the God of Israel: *as it is written*, (Psal. xviii. 49.) "*For this cause will I confess to thee among the Gentiles; and sing praises unto thy name*[c]." *And again he*, that is, Moses *saith*, (Deut. xxxii. 43.) "*Rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people*;" which may intimate their being called to participate the blessings once peculiar to Israel. *And again*, David saith, (Psalm cxvii. 1.) "*Praise the Lord, all ye* distant *nations, and repeat his praise, all ye people.*" Now surely this glorious privilege of an admission into the church, may justly engage the Gentile nations to praise God, in sublimer strains than any other occasion to which we can suppose either Moses or David to refer. *And again Isaiah says*, expressly in this view, (Isaiah xi. 10.) "*There shall be a root* from the stock *of Jesse, and one arising to rule over the Gentiles*, [*and*] *in him shall the Gentiles* hope and *trust*; not dreading destruction, but cheerfully expecting protection and salvation from thence." It is evident, therefore, how unreasonable it would be to despise them, and how fit it is affectionately to receive, esteem, and embrace them.

Rom. XV. 9.

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written. For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 I am willing, therefore, to persuade myself, that this mutually candid temper will prevail among you, and in the confidence of it, I commend

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing

[c] *I will confess to thee*, &c.] Diodati, and many others, suppose this to be only an allusion to the words of David in the place referred to. Mr. Pierce has taken great pains to prove, that the whole 18th Psalm is a *direct prophecy of Christ*, who is, according to his interpretation, to be considered as speaking throughout the whole of it. In which view he would render the *title*, "The song which David sang when God delivered him from the hand of Sheol, (instead of Saul,) that is, the *grave*." But I cannot think his reasoning conclusive, and the 23d verse of that Psalm seems an invincible objection against this solution. I have taken a middle way, which I hope the attentive reader will see reason to approve. Compare chap. ii. 24. where the same method of quoting seems evidently to be taken.

[d] *Sanctified*

lieving that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

mend you all, without any distinction, to the Divine grace and blessing. *And* accordingly, *may the God of hope*, from whose mercy all the hopes both of Jews and Gentiles are derived, *fill you with all* sacred *joy and peace in believing*. May he give you a well-grounded complacency and comfort, in consequence of the growing strength of your faith, *that you may abound in* a more cheerful and lively *hope* of eternal glory, *through the power of the Holy Spirit*, confirming all those habits of grace which you experience, as planted and rooted in your souls by his agency. *And* cheerfully do I expect this, when I reflect on what he has already done; for *I am* indeed *myself persuaded concerning you, my brethren, that ye are* already *full of goodness*, and of unfeigned benevolence to each other, *being filled*, through these illuminating influences which you have received, *with all* spiritual *knowledge, and* so well acquainted with the whole nature and genius of the christian religion, as to be both *able* and inclined *to admonish* and encourage *one another*, as to this meek and peaceable disposition, which I have been recommending, and every other part of an amiable and valuable character. *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly to you*, and enlarged with the greater freedom, *in this part* of my epistle, on the privilege to which God hath called Gentile believers, in some measure *as stirring up your* grateful and pious *remembrance* of them, *because of that* great *grace* and favour *which is given to me of God.* Even *that I should be the* ministering *servant of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, administering to them* in his name, and by his authority, *the* infinitely valuable *gospel of God: that the offering the Gentiles* to him as a holy sacrifice, by my hands, *may be acceptable to God, being sanctified* and set apart *by the Holy Spirit*, so plentifully communicated to them in a rich variety of gifts and of graces [d]. *I have therefore*, in this

SECT. XXXII.

Rom. XV. 13.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

14

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God.

15

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God; that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

16

17 I have therefore whereof

17

d *Sanctified by the Holy Spirit*, &c.] To explain this of the *miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit*; supposed to have happened at Antioch in Pisidia, on converts, who might be called the *first-fruits* of the idolatrous Gentiles, (Acts xiii. 52,) which is the interpretation advanced by the *author of Miscell. Sacra.* Vol. I. p. 112,) and his followers, is not only a needless limitation of the more noble and natural sense here given, but in my judgment, for reasons in part given in my *notes on the Acts*, an explication which goes upon various principles, precarious, or rather utterly incredible.

SECT. XXXII.

this respect, considerable *matter of boasting in Christ Jesus, with respect to the things of God* [c] and the office which I bear in his church; which I esteem far more honourable than any services of the Jewish state of priesthood.

wherein I may glory through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God.

Rom. XV. 17.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY the abundant communication of the Spirit that is in Jesus Christ, form us more to the amiable temper here recommended! That we may prove the distinguished strength of our minds, by the superior fortitude with which we *bear the infirmities of our weaker brethren*, and may seek the noble pleasure of *pleasing our neighbours for their good, and to their edification.* Let the generous *self denial of our great Lord* be in this view before our eyes; and let us endeavour to feel *the reproaches which are cast upon God*, much more sensibly than those which immediately *fall upon ourselves.*

Ver. 1 2 3

Happy are we in the scriptures, which through Divine Providence and grace have *been written for our instruction.* May they inspire us with patience and consolation, and establish our souls in humble hope! May our hearts be cemented in the bond of mutual love, *that with one mind, and one mouth we may glorify God*, and receive each other, with an endearment like that, with which, if we are true believers, notwithstanding our smaller differences, we are received by him.

4 5. 6, 7

Mercy is communicated by Christ to Jews and Gentiles, who therefore are justly required to unite their praises, to the *root of Jesse.* Let us all trust under the shadow of this pleasant plant, and may we be filled *with all joy and peace in believing.* What can furnish out so calm a peace, so sublime a joy, as the christian hope? May *we all abound in it by the power of the Holy Ghost.* And surely if we are filled with such joy and hope, we must be *filled with all goodness* too, with a truly benevolent temper towards others, which a sense of our own happiness tends most powerfully to promote. We Gentiles have been *presented to God* as a holy offering: may we be *sanctified more and more by his Spirit;* and established in a firm confidence in Christ, that he will transact all our concerns with God, under the character of the great Mediator: esteeming that the most happy and glorious circumstance in the station, which Providence may have assigned to us, which gives us the greatest opportunity of spreading the honour of so dear a name, and of presenting praises and services to God through him.

8--12 13 14 16 17

SECT.

c *With respect to the things of God*, &c. τα προς τον Θεον.] Raphelius very justly observes, that this phrase has a peculiar propriety, when applied to sacerdotal affairs, and especially *victims* presented to God; of which the *apostle* is here speaking. Other *texts* are illustrated by this *remark*, and particularly, Heb. ii. 17. See *Raphel. Not. ex. Xen. in loc.*

a *At*

SECT. XXXIII.

The apostle takes occasion from what he had been saying, to mention the extent of his own labours, and his purposes of further journies, in which he hoped to visit the Romans; in the mean time, earnestly recommending himself to their prayers. Rom. XV. 18, *to the end.*

ROMANS XV. 18.

FOR I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.

ROMANS XV. 18.

SECT. XXXIII. Rom. XV. 18.

I HAVE hinted above at the cause I have to rejoice and boast in Christ, as to what relates to God, and the office of my Christian ministry. *For I will not dare to* boast falsely, nor even *speak* any thing *of what Christ hath not* indeed *wrought by me, to bring the Gentiles into obedience.* No; God forbid! that I should either exceed the bounds of truth, in making the report, or arrogate any thing to myself, as my own work, when speaking of the conversions that have indeed been made. I humbly confess that it is Christ who hath wrought whatever is done: yet I boldly declare, that his grace and mercy hath, in this respect, distinguished me *both in word and deed*, by the manner in which he hath enabled me to speak, and the things which he hath strengthened me to perform. He hath wrought *by the* miraculous *energy of signs and wonders*, accomplished in and *by the* amazing *power of the Spirit of God*, which hath not only been plentifully imparted to me, but bestowed on others by the laying on of my hands; *so that* thus supported, *I have* with the happiest effect *fully preached* and explained *the gospel of Christ, from Jerusalem*, Antioch, and Arabia, in the east, *round about* through all the Lesser Asia, and Greece, *even as far as* the western shores of *Illyricum*, which so nearly borders on your own celebrated Italy[a]. *For it has* still *been the object of my ambition*, so far as Providence would permit me to indulge it, *to preach*

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

19

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ

20

a *As far as* the western shores of *Illyricum.*] Though it is evident from hence, that St. Paul before the *date* of *this epistle*, which was in the *year* 58, had preached the *gospel* in these regions, it is observable, that Luke takes no notice of this in the *history* of the Acts; where he also omits to mention the journey he took to Arabia, on his first conversion, and several other very remarkable *facts*, referred to in the xith *chapter* of the *second epistle to the Corinthians*, and elsewhere; and it is very possible, that the visit to Crete, when Titus was left behind to ordain *elders*, Tit. i. 5, might be of this *number*.

b *Object*

SECT. XXXIII.

preach the gospel, not where Christ was [already] named, lest I should seem desirous to *build upon another man's foundation*[b], and so decline the difficulties which attend the settlement of new churches. Others indeed have done this, and little else; *but* I have chosen a different manner of acting; *as it is written*, in words well applicable to the series of my labours, (Isa. lii. 15.) "*They to whom nothing was declared concerning him, shall see, and they who have not heard, shall understand.*" Thus have many received from my mouth, the first notices they have ever had of true religion, and of the method of salvation by the Great Redeemer. The consequence *therefore* was, that *I have been long hindered from coming to you;* which, out of my singular affection for you, I was very desirous of doing: though it be something contrary to the method of proceeding which I generally choose, as you have the Christian religion already, by the Divine grace, most happily planted among you *But now having no longer place*, either at Corinth, or elsewhere *in these* Grecian *climates*, no more work of this kind remaining to be done here, of which Providence seems to open any probable prospect, *and having* also on various accounts, *a great desire for many years to come to you;* I will attempt to put it into execution. *If I go into Spain, I will* endeavour, if possible, to *come to you*[c]! *for I hope* quickly to have an opportunity of going thither, and *as I pass by*, will

Rom. XV. 20.

Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard, shall understand.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you:

b *Object of my ambition*, so far as Providence would permit me to indulge it, *to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named*, &c.] The *meaning* to be sure cannot be, that Paul scorned to come after any other *Christian minister*; which would have argued a *height* of temper very inconsistent with the *humility* of this blessed apostle; and does not agree with what we read in the history of the Acts, of his going to preach the *gospel* at Damascus, Antioch and Jerusalem; to which it seems probable, Troas, if not Corinth, or Ephesus, may be added. It may signify that, far from declining *dangers* and *oppositions*, which might especially be expected in *first breaking up*, as it were, the *fallow-ground* of *heathen* and *unevangelized* countries, he rather felt a *sublime ambition*, as φιλοτιμεῖν signifies, (see *Elsner*, Vol. II. p. 64,) to make the first *proclamation* of a *Redeemer's* name, in places where it had before been quite unheard of. And probably, in mentioning this, he may glance upon those *false apostles* who crept into churches which he had planted, and endeavoured to establish their own reputation and influence there, by alienating the hearts of *his own converts* from him, their spiritual father; while like some in our own days, who have trod most exactly in their footsteps, they built on his grand and noble foundation an edifice of *wood, and hay, and stubble*, 1 Cor. iii. 12.

c *If I go to Spain*, &c.] It appears probable from hence, considering the *principle* which St. Paul chose to govern himself by, of *not building on another man's foundation*, that no *apostle* had yet planted any *church* in Spain: which, as Dr. Geddes justly observes, very ill agrees with *the legend of St. James*; for, according to that, he had now been 15 *years in Spain*, and had erected several *bishoprics* there *Gedd. Misc.* Vol. II. p. 221.

d *Churches*

you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company.*

will contrive, if I can, *to see you, and* shall expect *to be brought forward by you in my way thither,* by the kind attendance of some of my friends at Rome, and the refreshment which my spirit may receive from others; *if I may first,* not only have a short interview in passing, but make such an abode with you as to *be in some degree satisfied with your* [*company:*] I say in some degree, for I know that if I were to indulge my own affection to you, my visit would be much longer than the views of duty elsewhere will permit.

SECT. XXXIII.

Rom. XV. 24.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints.

This I speak with relation to my future designs: *but I am now going to Jerusalem, ministering to* the necessities of *the saints* there, by such contributions as I have raised for their subsistence, or may farther collect, as I prosecute my journey. *For it hath pleased* [*the churches of*] *Macedonia and Achaia*[d], *to make a certain collection for the poor saints,* their believing brethren, *that are in Jerusalem,* who are exposed to such peculiar persecution and affliction. I say, *it hath pleased them* to do this; *and,* though I acknowledge their free love and generosity in it, yet I may say, that in a sense, *they are their debtors: for if the Gentiles* have been brought into so happy a union with God's once peculiar people, and *are made partakers of their spiritual things* the invaluable blessings of the gospel, first brought to them from Jerusalem, and by persons of the Jewish nation too; *they ought* certainly to be ready, with all religious gratitude and respect, *to minister to them in their carnal things,* and impart the inferior blessings of Providence, in which they so much more abound. *Having therefore dispatched this affair, and sealed to them,* that is, safely delivered as under seal, *this* present, which is the *fruit* of that love and care which their Gentile brethren so justly express towards them, *I will,* if it please God to give me a favourable opportunity, *come by you into Spain. And* as I doubt not, but you will pray for me, that my coming may be comfortable, and useful for your confirmation in religion; so I have a cheerful confidence, that God will

25

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

26

27 It hath pleased them *verily;* and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things,

27

28 When therefore I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

28

29 And I am sure, that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing

29

[d] *Churches of Macedonia,* &c.] As we read of no more than one collection of the Macedonian churches, which was that directed by Paul, when he went from Ephesus to Macedonia, (Acts xx. 1,) in the year of Christ 57; this circumstance seems to fix the *date of this epistle* pretty early in 58; as was observed in the *introduction,* and the former *note* there referred to.

SECT. XXXIII.

will hear your prayers, and may say, that *I know that when I come among you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*, that is, with a full and abundant blessing, attending my ministerial and evangelical labours. Yet when I write thus, it is not from any particular revelation, to assure me that I shall be enabled to fulfil this purpose. I know, that in this journey to Jerusalem, I have, humanly speaking, a very dangerous scene before me, having some of my most mortal and implacable enemies to contend with. And therefore, as I cannot *but* apprehend the interest of the gospel to be concerned in my life and liberty, *I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love* which is the genuine fruit *of the Spirit*[e], *that you join your* utmost *strength* and fervency *with mine*[f], *in* [*your*] daily *prayers to God for me*, *That I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea*[g]; who are so full of rancour against me, as a deserter from their cause; and will, I am sure, spare no force or fraud to destroy me: *and* also *that my ministration at Jerusalem*, in the charitable affair which I mentioned above, *may be acceptable to the saints*, for whose use it is intended; so that no prejudices in our Christian brethren there, against the believing Gentiles, may prevail so far as to prevent their receiving it with a becoming candour and gratitude: *That* so, in consequence of all, *I may come to you with joy, by the will of God, and that I may be refreshed* [*together*] *with you*, in our intended interview. *And*, in the mean time, *may the God of peace*, who has graciously given us that peace with himself, which we esteem the first and greatest of blessings, and hath cemented our hearts in those Christian bonds of peace and love to each other, [*be*] *with you all*, whether I am present or absent. *Amen!*

Rom. XV. 29.

30 31 32 33

blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe, in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints:

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

IMPROVE-

e *By the love of the Spirit.*] Some would explain this of the *love* which the *Spirit* of God bears to us, or the *affection* which we owe to that *gracious agent*; and were we certain, that either of these were the genuine sense, important consequences would follow.

f *Join your utmost strength with mine.*] *Elsner*, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 65.) has a beautiful *note* on this word συναγωνισασθαι, to shew how exactly that is the import of it.

g *That I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea.*] How extreme their *bigotry* and *rage* was, appears from their behaviour to him at the very time here referred to, Acts xxi—xxiv. It was from a sense of the great importance of his life to the cause of Christianity, that he is thus urgent; else we may be assured, he would gladly have given it up. Phil. i. 21, &c.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us behold with pleasure the modesty and humility which is joined with all the zeal of this holy *apostle*, while he thus obliquely owns, in a manner which shews how familiar the thought was to his mind, that all he had done in the Christian ministry, and for the propagation and advancement of the *gospel*, was only what *Christ had done by him*, to procure such *obedience of the Gentiles, both in word and in deed.* SECT. XXXIII. Ver. 18, 19

Adored be the *grace* that made his labours so successful, and sowed the blessed seed so wide by his diligent hand, from *Jerusalem* unto *Illyricum*. Most divine instructions did he give them in matters of faith, and he taught them to express that faith by their works. While he was dead to all thoughts of enriching himself, and in some instances, chose rather to maintain himself, by his own labours, than to subsist on the bounty of others, *his liberal soul devised liberal things* for his necessitous brethren. He raised a noble collection, and was much concerned, not only that it might be safely, but *acceptably* delivered. 25, &c. 31

Well may our souls be edified, by observing the things which lay nearest the heart of this generous *apostle*, that coming to the *Christian* friends at *Rome, he might come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*, and that if he was spared through *their prayers*, it might be for public usefulness *St. Paul*, dead as he was to human applause, was, from much nobler motives, solicitous about *his acceptance;* and he shews by his manner of speaking, what a sense he had of the degree in which it depended upon the turn and disposition which God should be pleased to give to the spirits of men: may this just and pious thought frequently dwell upon the hearts of the ministers of *Christ!*

Some of the prayers, which the *apostle* so affectionately bespeaks, were answered; and some seemed to be forgotten: Yet did God make, what seemed the rejection of some, the means of answering the rest. He was for a while *delivered into the hands of those* in *Judea*, who *believed not;* and this providence, which might have seemed an invincible obstacle to his design, proved the occasion of bringing him to *Rome*, and promoted the success of his ministry there.

Let us adore the *God* of *grace*, and *peace*, who works the most important ends, by methods to us unthought of; and let us be greatly cautious, that we do not rashly judge that he hath rejected our prayers, because we do not see them answered in that particular way which might have been more agreeable to our own wishes. 33

SECT. XXXIV.

The Apostle, after recommending Phœbe to the Romans, particularly salutes several of his friends resident among them. Rom. XVI. 1—16.

ROMANS XVI. 1.

SECT. XXXIV.

Rom. XVI. 1.

HAVING thus dispatched the substance of my epistle, *I* would add, by way of postscript, something relating to a few particular Christian friends, with us, or with you: and first would *recommend to you* the bearer of this epistle, *Phœbe, our sister, who is*, not only partaker with us in the profession of the gospel, but in the office of *a* stated *servant*, or deaconness[a], *of the church in Cenchrea*[b]; in the neighbourhood of

2 which I write to you. And I desire *that you* would *entertain her, in* regard to her relation to *the Lord* Jesus Christ, our common Saviour, with all Christian affection, and *in a manner becoming* those that profess themselves *saints*, separated from the world, to the honour of his name; *and* that you would *assist her in any thing in which she may need it of you; for* I can assure you, *she has been*, in her office, *an helper of many, and of myself in particular;* on which account she is well worthy of your regard, and will I hope meet with a very kind reception from all that love me, or have any concern for the common cause.

3 I desire you would also *salute* the pious *Priscilla, and* her worthy consort *Aquila*[c] who have both deserved the name of *my fellow labourers in Christ Jesus*, as they have each of them, according

ROMANS XVI. 1.

I COMMEND unto you Phœbe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is in Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

a *A* stated *servant*, or deaconness.] Compare 1 Tim. v. 9. That there were some grave and pious *matrons* engaged in such an office, in the *primitive church*, is, I think, very apparent from these places: but it is obvious there were circumstances which rendered such sort of *servants* much more useful and necessary in the churches at that time, than they would now generally be.

b *The church in Cenchrea.*] As Paul mentions the church in Cenchrea, as distinct from that at Corinth, though Cenchrea lay in the *suburbs* of it, I must submit it to the candid reader, whether it be not probable, that it had a *distinct pastor*, or *bishop* of its own.

c *Priscilla and Aquila.*] This excellent *couple* appear, by this passage, to be returned to Rome, on the ceasing of that *edict* against the Jews, which had driven them from thence, in the reign of Claudius, Acts xviii. 2. Priscilla seems to have been a woman of great note, and probably of distinguished genius, and influence; which appears, not only from the manner in which she is here named, but also from the edification which the eloquent Apollos received from her instructions, in concurrence with those of her husband.

d *The*

SECT XXXIV.

Rom. XVI. 4.

cording to their different stations and characters, been ready to do their utmost to promote the interest of the gospel amongst us. And indeed they are *persons, who for* the preservation of *my life*, exposed to so many tumultuous dangers, (Acts xviii. 6, 7, 12, 13,) *have*, as it were, *laid down their own necks*, that is, offered themselves to the extremest dangers: *to whom therefore, I do not only owe my own* personal *thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles*, whose apostle I peculiarly am, and for whose spiritual liberties and privileges I am always so strenuous an advocate. You will also, I hope, present my sincere *and* affectionate salutation *to the church that is in their house;* as I know there are several other Christians with them, resident in the family, or meeting them for social worship there. *Salute also my beloved Epenetus, who is* one of *the first-fruits of Achaia*[d] *to Christ*, in the number of the first Christian converts of these regions, and therefore worthy my particular remembrance. *Salute Mary, who has taken a great deal of pains on our account*, to accommodate me and my companions when we were in her neighbourhood. *Salute Andronicus*[e]*, and Junias, my kinsmen, and* dear in the bond of Christian fellowship, and united sufferings too; having once been *my fellow-prisoners; who were* early *in* great *reputation among the apostles*[f]*, and were also* happy *in* being joined to the church of *Christ before me;* and therefore, though once the object of my furious persecuting zeal, are now honoured and beloved as my elder brethren in the

4 (Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.)

5 Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

d *The first-fruits*, &c.] It is very probable he might be converted at the same time with Stephanas, called also the *first-fruits* of Achaia, (1 Cor. xvi. 15,) for there is no manner of necessity to understand by that expression, the very *first Christian convert*. Indeed it is possible, Epenetus might be one of that happy family to which this appellation is given.

e *Andronicus*, &c.] Dr. *Jenkins* very justly observes, that this list of names can be no objection at all to the authority of this *epistle;* for it might be an encouragement to the persons thus particularly mentioned, might conciliate some additional respect to them, whereby their usefulness might be promoted, and would render each of these persons a kind of *witness* to the *genuineness* of the *epistle*, as we may naturally suppose it was shewed to each of them. *Jenk. of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 37.

f *In reputation among the apostles.*] Diodati thinks, that *apostles* here signifies *evangelists;* and that the meaning is, that these persons were noted *messengers* of the *churches*, 2 Cor. viii. 23; Phil. ii. 25. But I rather apprehend with Mr. *Cradock*, (*Apost. Hist.* p. 43,) that they were some early *converts*, who had been known and much esteemed by the *apostles*, before the dispersion occasioned by the death of Stephen, (Acts viii. 2,) and if so, perhaps Paul might once have been active in persecuting them, and have learned their names at first, with an *hostile intent* of hunting them down to destruction.

g *Those*

SECT. XXXIV.

Rom. XVI. 8.

the Lord. *Salute Amplias, my beloved in the Lord,* for whom I have a most affectionate friendship, cemented in the bonds of mutual faith and love. *Salute* also *Urbanus, my fellow-*
9 *labourer in* the gospel of *Christ,* to the service of which he is so faithfully devoted, *and* with him *my beloved Stachys,* of whose friendship I cannot
10 but retain an affectionate remembrance. *Salute Apelles,* whose long experienced worth renders him thoroughly *approved in* the cause of *Christ,* as a disciple of a character undoubtedly honourable. *Salute* also *those* [*of the family*] *of Aristobulus*[g], and assure the Christians that hold the lowest station in it, that they are not forgotten
11 by me. *Salute my cousin Herodion,* still dearer to me in the ties of grace, than in those of nature; *and those belonging to* [*the houshold of*] *Narcissus, who are* believers *in the Lord* Jesus
12 Christ. *Salute* those excellent women *Tryphena and Tryphosa, who,* according to their stations, *have laboured* with great diligence *in* the service of *the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, who* distinguished herself among many who were faithful and diligent; so that it may properly be said, she *laboured much in the Lord. Salute*
13 *Rufus, chosen in the Lord,* whom I esteem as a Christian of a most excellent character; *and* pay the most affectionate respects, in my name, to *his mother and mine*[h]: for so I may call her, on account of that maternal tenderness and care
14 which she has often shewn towards me. *Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and* all *the brethren with them,* as if every one of them had been particularly named.
15 *Salute Philologus, and Julias, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the* other sincere *saints* and Christians[i], *that are with them;* whom,

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

9 Salute Urbane our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *houshold.*

11 Salute Herodion, my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *houshold* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and

g *Those* [*of the family*] *of Aristobulus.*] The *Roman church* hath consecrated days to the honour of many of the *saints* mentioned in this *chapter,* whom they declare, I know not on what sufficient authority, to have been *martyrs.* See *L'Enf. Pref. to the Romans,* p. 6, 7. To these they have added Aristobulus, and Narcissus, though there is no certain evidence that they were Christians. It seems most probable, they were persons of high rank, who had each a great family of *slaves;* and some of them being *Christian converts,* the *apostle* would not forget them, low as their *rank* in life was, when he was saluting his brethren in so particular a manner. We may observe, what a regard the *apostle* had for *foreign churches,* when he informed himself of the *names, circumstances,* and *abodes,* of so many then in Rome.

h *His mother and mine.*] Hence some have thought that Rufus was at least half-brother to Paul, but perhaps he might in this *expression* refer to the maternal care this good woman had taken of him.

i *All the saints,* &c.] Calvin, and others, very justly observe, that had Peter been now at Rome, he would undoubtedly have

and all the saints which are with them.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

whom with the rest of the persons that I have mentioned, I most sincerely honour and love. In a word, whether you be Jews, or Gentiles, when you meet at your assemblies, *salute one another with a holy kiss* [k], and take care that the kiss which you give to each other, at the conclusion of your worship, be expressive of a pure and undissembled affection, and conducted with the gravest and most decent circumstances. All *the churches of Christ* in these parts *salute you*; as they, with me, have heard of the eminent figure you make in religion, and the many excellent persons who are resident among you.

SECT. XXXIV.

Rom. XVI. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

THOUGH so much of this section be a mere catalogue of names, it is not without its moral and religious instruction. We see in it the good heart of the apostle; how full he was of the sentiments of Christian friendship; how solicitous he was to express his esteem and love for his brethren in the Lord. And God hath made him the means of transmitting to posterity, the memorials of many excellent persons, of whom we no where else read, or hear any thing: of whom all that we know is, that they were such as deserved the particular affection of St. Paul, and were professors of the *gospel at Rome*, in the reign of a very worthless and wicked prince, under whom it is highly probable, that some of them suffered martyrdom for Christ.

His large heart opened to embrace them all, whether by birth Jews or Gentiles: and as they shared in his salutions, we cannot doubt, but they shared in his prayers too. We find some of these pious, and much esteemed friends of the *apostle*, were women, of whom he speaks with great regard, as of persons whom divine grace had made very useful in the *church*: who had been *helpers of many*, and particularly of him; who had *laboured, yea, had laboured much in the Lord.* Let not that sex therefore think that it is cut off from the service of Christ, because the ministry is appropriated to men. Eminently useful have many of them been. The

Ver. 1 2,

12

have been named; since no one in this numerous *catalogue* was of a dignity and eminence, by any means comparable to him; and yet, if he were not there at this time, the whole *tradition* of the *Roman bishops*, as the *Roman church* delivers it, fails in the most fundamental *article* of all.

k *A holy kiss.*] The custom of thus *saluting* each other, was borrowed from the *Jewish synagogue*; and as chastely and prudently as it was managed, it seems to have been the occasion of those false and scandalous reports which were so industriously propagated among the *heathen* of the adulterous and incestuous practices, in *christian assemblies*, on which account, it seems to have been laid aside very early.

SECT. XXXIV. The most valuable ministers have often been assisted by them, in the success of their work, while their pious care, under the restraint of the strictest modesty and decorum, has happily and effectually influenced children, servants, and young friends; yea, has been the means of sowing the seeds of religion in tender minds, before they have been capable of coming under ministerial care.

3 Generous was the zeal which Aquila and Priscilla shewed in exposing even their own lives in the defence of this holy *apostle.* Great obligations did they, thereby, lay upon all the *churches* of the Gentiles, and on us, who, at this distance of time, receive so many blessings from the long continuance of St. Paul's life, which 4 they were ready so heroically to defend at the hazard of their own.

Truly valuable were these mutual friendships, of which, zeal for Christ was the common bond; lasting, and indeed everlasting. These excellent persons are doubtless the companions of Paul in glory now, and will many of them be *his crown in the day of the Lord.* Some of them indeed *were in Christ before him;* and he speaks of it as peculiarly to their honour. Let those, who were early in Christ, rejoice in the thought. Let those who came later into his *church,* be exhorted to exert themselves with the greater vigour in his service, that they may recover the time they have lost: and let us all learn to esteem it, as the most substantial proof of our love to those who are peculiarly dear to us, to shew, upon all occasions, how sincerely we wish, that they may early form an acquaintance with Christ; that they may constantly walk in him, and grow up in all things in him, as our common Head.

SECT. XXXV.

The Apostle concludes with other salutations, and a necessary caution against those who would divide the church, together with a doxology suited to the general purport of what he had been writing. Rom. XVI. 17, *to the end.*

ROMANS XVI. 17.

SECT. XXXV. AND *now,* having dispatched these salutations, which Christian friendship has largely dictated, let me conclude my epistle to you, Rom. XVI. 17. with a few words of additional advice. And *I* would particularly *exhort you, brethren,* to have your eyes upon, and *to mark out* for the caution of others, *those* persons, whether in public or private life, *which cause divisions and offences* [*among you*] by false doctrines, factious tempers, and scandalous lives; therein doing *contrary to that* pure, certain and uniting *doctrine*

ROMANS XVI. 17. NOW I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned

learned; and avoid them.

trine which you have learned of us, the apostles of Jesus Christ, who have been commissioned by him, as the authentic teachers of his gospel. *And* when you have discovered such pernicious seducers, *avoid them*, so as to have no intimate converse with them; nor even to permit them to continue in your communion, if they will not be reclaimed by the milder methods of brotherly admonition. *For* you may be assured, that *such*, whatever they may pretend, *serve not the Lord Jesus Christ*; under whose commission we so apparently act, and the nature of whose religion is so holy and benevolent: *but* on the contrary, it is plain they serve *their own belly*; they have only their own secular interest in view, and hope to gain some temporal advantage, by setting themselves up as heads of parties among you; *and by fair speeches, and flattering forms of address*[a], they *deceive the hearts of the innocent* and well-meaning, and lead them into snares of which they are little aware.

SECT. XXXV. Rom. XVI. 18

18 For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil.

It is very possible, that having done so much mischief here at Corinth, and at other places, they may also make some attempts upon you; especially considering the figure you make in the christian world; but I trust their endeavours will be unsuccessful, *for* the report of *your* exemplary *obedience* to the dictates of our holy religion, *is come abroad unto all: therefore I rejoice on your account*, in hope you will overcome this, and every other danger, and maintain the good character you have already gained. *But* I give you this caution out of my abundant tenderness and care; because *I am desirous you may be wise*, and sagacious, *with respect to* every opportunity of practising and maintaining *that which is good, and* as *simple* as possible, *with regard to that which is evil:* perfectly free from all ill views, and designs of every kind. And I know, how much the insinuations of those men tend to destroy those benevolent dispositions, which should ever reign in the hearts of christians, and to fill them with such prejudices against each other, as may produce mutual injuries. 19

And

a *Flattering forms of address.*] Ευλογια, in this connection, has a force, which I knew not how to express, but by this paraphrasis. We see here what these *weapons* are which these false *apostles* opposed to the *miracles* of the true.

b *Scripsi.*]

SECT. XXXV.

Rom. XVI. 20.

And I have an agreeable persuasion, that you will take care to maintain this happy mixture of innocence and prudence, and will succeed in that care. Yes, my brethren, I am well assured, that *the God of peace*, from whom we derive all our peace and happiness, and who delights in seeing this peaceful temper prevail among his servants, *will quickly bruise Satan under your feet*; will defeat the artifices by which the great enemy of God and men is endeavouring to insinuate himself into the church, and to infuse his own malignant spirit into its members. God will enable you, animated by the first great promise, (Gen. iii. 15.) which you have seen so illustriously fulfilled, to trample on the sly deceiver; as on a wounded serpent, whose head your great Leader hath already crushed. And for this purpose, *may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which hath already been in so considerable a degree imparted to you, [*be*] still more constantly and abundantly *with you! Amen.*

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

21 I add, by way of postscript, that *Timothy, my* pious and zealous *fellow labourer*, to whose affection I am so much obliged, *and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater*, the messengers of the church at Berœa [b], and both of them *my kinsmen, salute you* with sincere christian friendship.

21 Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsman, salute you.

22 *I Tertius*, or Silas, *who wrote* [*this*] *epistle*, while the apostle Paul dictated it to me [c], as his secretary, *do also* most affectionately *salute you in the Lord.*

22 I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

23 The generous *Gaius*, who is *my host, and* indeed, I may say, *that of the whole church*, so ready is he to every act of hospitality and goodness, *salutes you* [*and*] *Erastus the steward of the city*, [*also*] *salutes you; and* so doth one *Quartus*, who, though you may not particularly know him, is *a* Christian *brother* [d], whose name I think worthy of being inserted.

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Once

b *Sosipater.*] As it appears from Acts xx. 4. that Sosipater was with St. Paul, when he travelled in Greece, in the year 58, this is one argument for fixing the date of this epistle to that year.

c *Who wrote this epistle*, &c.] St. Paul seems not himself to have been very well versed in the Greek characters, Gal. vi. 11. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 21. He therefore made use of the hand of Silas, or as the Latin would express his name, Tertius, who wrote what the apostle dictated; and I submit to consideration, whether some of the intricate, and some of the unfinished sentences, which we meet with in these epistles, might not be owing to this method of writing by an *amanuensis*. They, whose variety of business has obliged them to dictate to others, and use their pens in such a manner, will be very sensible, this is no absurd, or very improbable conjecture. Compare Jer. xxxvi. 17, 18, as an instance of a similar nature.

d *A brother.*] Mr. Pierce thinks this expression

SECT. XXXV.

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Once more receive my repeated good wishes, that the best of all blessings may attend you; even that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* may *be with you all;* to which I again put my cordial *Amen.* Rom. XVI. 24.

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Now, let me sum up all, with ascribing praise to the great Author of all the blessings, of which I have been writing; even *to him, who* as he has called you to participate these invaluable blessings, *is able to strengthen you*[e] in every virtuous disposition and good resolution; *according to* the tenour of *my gospel, even the preaching of Jesus Christ,* as our only and almighty Saviour, whom I proclaim, wherever I come, to Gentiles, as well as to Jews: a gospel which, however it is opposed as contrary, is indeed most exactly *agreeable to the revelation* which God has now been pleased to make *of that mystery in ancient times kept in silence*[f], and never before so fully exhibited. 25

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:)

But, adored be his goodness, it is *now made manifest according to the* tenour of the *prophetic scriptures, according to the commandment of the eternal God.* And it is not only discovered to us by the Spirit, but publicly made known *to all* the Gentile *nations,* as well as the people of Israel, *for the obedience of faith;* that they, firmly believing it, may yield a correspondent practical submission to it, and so obtain by it everlasting salvation; subjecting 26

27 to God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

themselves in all things *to* the sacred authority of *the only wise God,* who has so prudently contrived, and so effectually executed, this grand scheme. To him, on the whole, [*be*] *glory by Jesus Christ,* in all the churches, and in the general assembly, *to endless ages! Amen.* 27

IMPROVE-

expression intimates that he was a christian minister. Compare Phil. iv. 21, 22, but I cannot say it appears sufficiently evident.

e *Now to him,* &c.] This *doxology* is found, in many *copies,* at the end of the xivth *chapter,* and in the Alexandrian MS. is inserted both there and here. Jerome says, that Marcian rejected the two last *chapters,* as contrary to his opinion: and Sir Norton Knatchbull conjectures, that, in order to prevent any suspicion, as if the *epistle* ended with the xivth *chapter,* some orthodox Christian transferred this passage from thence, which he supposes to have been its true place. Dr. Mills is of the same opinion; and supposes the two last *chapters* to have been added by way of *postscript,* as the *apostle* had time, before he sent it away. All the other *epistles* of Paul end with the *benediction.*

f *Mystery,* &c.] Many *commentators* explain these *verses* as referring to the calling of the Gentiles into the *church;* and then some of them suppose the χρονοις αιωνιοις to refer to the *division of time* by *jubilees;* but it is certain, the words will make good and weighty sense on the different *interpretation* we have given; and as the *jubilees* so early grew into neglect among the Jews, it would be less natural to suppose, the periods of time they measured, to be designed here.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XXXV.

WORTHY are these concluding words of being deeply engraven on every heart. The gospel was *a mystery*, long concealed in the breast of the Divine wisdom, and opened but by imperfect hints, even to the church itself, in former ages. Let us be humbly thankful, *that it is now made manifest*; and that we are among the *nations* who are *called to the obedience of the faith*. Let us be solicitous to answer that call; and if we have already done it in any measure, let us remember, we are still surrounded with many snares and dangers; so that we have continual need of being *strengthened and confirmed* by him who hath done us the honour to *call us into the fellowship of his gospel*. Let us walk worthy of it, and faithfully endeavour to advance its interests, in a noble superiority to all those secular and *mercenary motives*, by which bad men, under a Christian profession, are often influenced, and in consequence of which, they often abuse even the ministry of religion to the most infamous purposes.

Ver. 25 26 25 18

Let us shew, how thoroughly we have imbibed the spirit of this Divine dispensation, by the generosity of our sentiments; guarding both against *scandals and divisions*; and aiming in wisdom, integrity, and love, both to unite and to edify, the body of *Christ*. *Satan* will indeed lay discouragements and stumbling-blocks in our way, and perhaps may sometimes use very subtle arts to promote discord and division among those who ought to be most dear to each other in the bonds of the Lord. But let us use a holy caution, and commit ourselves chearfully to the Divine keeping; and we may humbly hope, that the God of peace will make us victorious over all the artifice and power of our spiritual enemies, and will shortly *bruise Satan under our feet*.

17, 18 20

Let us humbly hope that he will, through *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in virtue of that great original promise which was given to chear our first parents, when they lay under their deep distress, and heavy load of new-contracted guilt. (Gen. iii. 13.) And as we see how God hath taken the subtle in his own craftiness, and triumphed over *Satan*, by that event which he laboured to accomplish, as his own triumph, even the death of our Divine Redeemer; let us ascribe to him, *as the only wise God, everlasting glory*. And O, that we may join with all the redeemed world in this ascription, when the *accuser of the brethren*, the great enemy of God and man, with all his adherents and instruments, *shall be cast out for ever!* Amen.

27

N. B. A *note*, added to the end of this *epistle*, says, that *it was written to the Romans, from Corinth, by Phœbe, servant of the church at Cenchrea.* Part of this, the first *verse* of this last *chapter* justifies; but as the most *ancient manuscripts* have not these *notes*, and some of them are plainly contrary to some passages in the *epistle*, to which they are affixed, they are to be esteemed of no authority.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE ROMANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE apostle Paul had been the instrument in the hand of God, of planting a numerous *Christian* church, chiefly of Gentile converts, at Corinth; where his ministry was so successful, that he continued there near two years; (Acts xviii. 1—18.) Corinth was a city of Achaia, situated on the Isthmus, which joins Peloponnesus, (now called the Morea,) to the rest of Greece. From the convenience of its situation for commerce, it abounded in riches, and was furnished with all the accommodations, with all the elegancies and superfluities of life. This by too natural a consequence, led its inhabitants into luxury, lewdness, and all manner of vice; and they were accordingly infamous even to a proverb.

About the space of three years after the *apostle* had left Corinth, to preach the *gospel* in other parts of Greece, he had occasion to write *this epistle* to the Corinthians; which he accordingly wrote from Ephesus about the year 57, the 3d of the emperor Nero. See sect. 42, *note* [d], p. 183, and sect. 44, *note* [a], p. 192.

The reason for which this epistle was written, was, to answer some important *queries* proposed by the Corinthians; and correct the various criminal irregularities and *disorders* of which they were guilty.

In correcting the *abuses* with which they were chargeable,

The *first* article on which the apostle thought himself obliged to insist, related to the *parties* and *factions* into which they were fallen, and the opposition which was made by some of them to his own apostolical mission. On this head he largely discourses in the first *four* chapters; introducing the epistle with an affectionate address to the Corinthian converts, in which he congratulates

tulates them on the rich variety of gifts and graces God had bestowed upon them; and animates their hopes of his continued favour in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, even till the day of his final appearance; (chap. i. 1—9.) And then, expressing his great concern on account of their animosities and factions, he expostulates with them on the unreasonableness of setting up *Christian* ministers as heads of parties, when they were under such strong engagements to Christ, as their common Saviour and Master; (ver. 10—16.) And as he well knew, that a fond regard to eloquence and philosophy, to which some of the Corinthian teachers made high pretensions, was one great occasion of their divisions, he sets himself to shew how little stress was to be laid upon them; which he illustrates by the choice that God had made of gospel-preachers, entirely destitute of these boasted accomplishments; (ver. 17, *to the end.)* The apostle further explains the reasons for which he had declined all ostentation of eloquence, when he came among the Corinthians, and particularly insists on the extraordinary nature of the facts and doctrines he was to teach, which were of a much higher original than any discoveries which human wit or learning could make, and were to be traced up to the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit; their nature being so wonderful, that it was difficult for the corrupted minds of men to receive them, even when they were taught; (chap. ii. *throughout.)* After this the apostle more directly comes to the case of their animosities and divisions, and reproves their carnality in contending about human teachers, and urges many important considerations to cure them of so unbecoming a temper; (chap. iii. 1—9.) Reminding them for this purpose, of the great trial which every man's work must undergo, the guilt of polluting by unhallowed divisions the temple of God, the vanity of human wisdom in his sight, and of glorying in men, since ministers and all things are appointed for the common benefit of believers; (ver. 10, *to the end.)* The apostle further discourses with the same view of the nature of the ministerial office, reminds them of the final judgment of him who searcheth all hearts, and the obligation they were under to the Divine goodness for every advantage by which they were distinguished from others; (chap. iv. 1—7.) And as a particular opposition had been made in the Corinthian church to himself, he represents the hardships and dangers to which he and his brethren had been, and were exposed in the service of the gospel, and the obligations which he had in an especial manner laid upon them; warning them not to force him upon severities, which he was very unwilling to use; (ver. 8, *to the end.)* And having thus discoursed with admirable wisdom, faithfulness, and zeal, he dismisses, for the present, this part of his subject; which, on account of his personal concern in it, was attended with circumstances of peculiar delicacy.

The *second* topic which the apostle considers, was the case of a notorious offender in the Corinthian church, who was guilty of most scandalous *incest* with his father's wife. Animated, therefore,

fore, with a warm zeal for the honour of Christ, for the purity and credit of the *Christian* church, with a benevolent concern for the conviction of the offender, and that others might be deterred from the like enormous practices, he exhorts them, upon these principles, to beware of all unnecessary connection with him, and to exclude him from *Christian* communion; (chap. v. *throughout.*)

The *third* article, which, in this epistle, St. Paul exhibits against the Corinthians, is, that by a covetous and litigious temper, they were led, contrary to the rules of *Christian* prudence and love, and sometimes contrary even to the principles of justice, to prosecute their brethren in the heathen courts. This he solemnly censures and condemns; and closes what he offers upon this head, by warning them of the sad consequences which would attend the indulgence of those criminal dispositions in which *Christianity* found them, and from which it was intended to deliver them; (chap. vi. 1—11.)

In the *fourth* place, the apostle Paul cautions them against the sin of *fornication*, to which they had been, in their Gentile state, greatly addicted. And it should seem, that having been formerly wont to look upon this heinous crime as lawful, there were, even now, some among them, who reckoned it among the things indifferent; and that they were not in general, sufficiently convinced of its enormity. He therefore introduces what he proposed to say on this subject, with some useful reflections on things really indifferent, and then illustrates the heinous evil of fornication from views peculiar to the *Christian* religion; (ver. 12, *to the end.)*

Having thus largely, and with great faithfulness and plainness, corrected some sad *disorders* with which the Corinthians were chargeable,

The apostle proceeds to the other main end of his epistle, namely, to answer certain important *questions* which it seems the Corinthians had proposed. And here,

He determines, *First*, Those which related to the *marriage-state*. Some questions upon this would naturally arise among the first converts to Christianity; as, Whether they should disown and withdraw from their partners, if they continued unbelievers? And, whether it was good to marry in the present circumstances of the church? when the contracting new, and especially such near alliances, in those times of persecution, would involve in peculiar difficulties those who should enter into the marriage-relation; which they might notwithstanding judge it proper for other reasons to do. Now the apostle shews at his entrance upon this subject, that in some circumstances the marriage-state should be entered into, and continued in: but in others, foreborn, particularly at that time; and enjoins wives not to depart from their husbands, and husbands not to dismiss their wives; (chap. vii. 1—11.) He then shews that marriages were not to be dissolved, as some thought they might, on account of a difference in religion; and very properly urges in the general, contentment with the stations in which they were called, and a concern to serve

serve God in their proper condition, whether married or single, bound or free; (ver. 12—24.) And with regard to single persons, he asserts the inexpediency of their marrying in the circumstances of the church at that juncture, inculcating a serious sense of the shortness of time, as the best remedy against inordinate attachment to any secular interest; (ver. 25, *to the end.)*

A *second* query which the Corinthians had proposed to the apostle to be resolved, was, How far they might comply with their heathen neighbours in *eating things sacrificed to idols?* St. Paul upon this reminds them, that though all christians might well be supposed to know the vanity of those imaginary deities to which the sacrifices were offered; yet it might prove to some, an occasion of grief and scandal, that the professors of christianity should partake of these sacrifices in their temple; which therefore charity would require them by all means to avoid; chap. viii. *throughout.)* And having, in this instance, urged them to a christian condescension to their brethren, that he might inforce the principle more strongly, by his own condescension to the weak, in waving to accept of a maintenance from the Corinthians, he introduces what he had to say upon this head, with a short discourse on the right, which as a gospel-minister, he really had to be supported by those among whom he laboured; which he argues both from natural equity, and scripture principles; (chap. ix. 1—14.) He then proceeds to shew, that out of tenderness to them, and to prevent exceptions to the gospel, he had waved this right, and had been cautious upon all occasions to avoid offence, by exercising self-denial, which he illustrates by a very expressive simile taken from those who contended in the Grecian games, (ver. 15, *to the end.*) And to recommend this self-denial and holy caution to the Corinthians, he represents the privileges which Israel of old enjoyed, and the displeasure, which, notwithstanding this, God manifested against them in the wilderness, when they indulged their irregular and luxurious desires, and in contempt of the manna, lusted after quails; an example, proper to put the Corinthians in mind of the danger they run of incurring the Divine displeasure, if they should be induced, for the sake of gratifying a luxurious appetite, to partake of entertainments upon *things offered to idols*, in the heathen temples; (chap. x. 1—13.) That he might therefore caution them against all approaches to idolatry, he particularly argues, from that communion, which as Christians, they had with Christ at his table, that they ought to keep at the remotest distance from what might justly be called having communion with *devils*; (ver. 14,—22.) After which he lays down more particular directions, as to the cases and circumstances in which *things sacrificed to idols* might, or might not, lawfully be eaten; and urges further considerations, to engage them willingly to resign their own gratification for the glory of God, and the good of their brethren; (ver. 23, chap. xi. 1.)

The apostle now proceeds to a *third* query, concerning the manner in which *women* should deliver any thing in public, when

by

by a Divine impulse called to it. And after having settled this point, he particularly corrects the indecency of women's prophesying with their head uncovered; (ver. 2—16. Being thus led to consider circumstances which attended the Christian worship, he takes the occasion naturally afforded, of introducing a discourse upon several abuses among them of an higher nature, with respect to the public celebration of the Lord's supper; leading back their views to its original institution, and inferring from thence the danger of profaning it in the manner they did; (ver. 17, *to the end.)* Being thus naturally, and as it were accidentally, brought to take notice again of the corruptions prevailing in the Corinthian church, the apostle makes some remarks upon their abuse of the *spiritual gifts*; observing that they all proceed from the same sacred agent, and are intended for the edification of the same body, in which all christians are united; (chap. xii. 1—13.) Inculcating humility in the use of those gifts, and that mutual affection which the Corinthians needed to be taught, he pursues the allegory further, and represents Christians as so united in one body, as to have entirely the same interest; and insists on a tender care of the least member, from its subserviency to the good of the whole, ver. 15, *to the end.)* And to engage the Corinthians to cultivate *love*, as more important than the gifts about which they contended, he gives a lovely description of that excellent grace, concluding it with a reflection on its perpetual duration, in which it exceeds even faith and hope; (chap. xiii. *throughout.)* After thus inculcating charity and love, a grace which they needed much to adorn their Christian profession, and direct the exercise of their spiritual gifts, the apostle particularly cautions them against their prevailing vain ostentation of the gift of tongues, and reasons with them concerning the absurdity of the manner in which they, some of them at least, abused that gift; (chap. xiv. 1—19. And adds, upon the whole, proper motives to prevent that abuse; (ver. 20, *to the end.)*

Some among the Corinthians doubted, and others denied *the resurrection of the dead.* To prove and establish therefore this great and peculiar article of the Christian faith, the apostle Paul makes some remarks on the certainty and importance of the resurrection of Christ: (chap. xv. 1—11.) And infers from the resurrection of Christ, the certainty of *the resurrection of the dead,* urging the importance of this grand fundamental doctrine of Christianity, and mentioning in the series of his argument, that surrender of the mediatorial kingdom which Christ at the consummation of all things shall make to the Father; (ver. 12—34.) After which he answers objections to the resurrection, drawn from our not being able to conceive of the particular manner in which it shall be effected; and concludes with urging this doctrine, as a noble incentive to the greatest readiness, and the warmest zeal in religion, (ver. 25, *to the end.)*

This is the connection of the several parts of this excellent epistle, and a sketch of the apostle's *design*; which was to correct the *corruptions and abuses*; and answer some *queries* of the Corinthian church. And though he hath not throughout discussed these two points separately, and with the exactness of systematical method; yet he hath handled his subject in a more natural manner, and given a masterly specimen of the freedom usual in *epistolary* writings. Before he concludes, he gives some advice to the Corinthian church, relating to the collection proposed to be made for the poor saints in Judea; (chap. xvi. 1—12.) And then closes all, with some particular salutations and directions, with general exhortations to courage and love, a solemn benediction to true Christians, and an awful anathema against those who were destitute of love to our Lord JesusChrist; (ver. 13, *to the end of the epistle.)*

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

SECTION I.

The Apostle introduces his epistle with a most affectionate and suitable salutation, in which he congratulates the Corinthians on the rich variety of gifts and graces which God had bestowed upon them; and animates their hope of his continued favour in the Lord Jesus Christ, even till the day of his final appearance. 1 Cor. I. 1—9.

1 Cor. I. 1.

PAUL called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes, *our* brother;

1 CORINTHIANS I. 1.

SECT. i.

1 Cor. I. 1.

PAUL, who was in so peculiar a manner *called* [*to be*] *an apostle*[a] *of Jesus Christ*, not undertaking that office of himself, but invested with it *by* the most express declaration of *the will of God*, signified at the time of that miraculous interposition of which you have so often heard; *and Sosthenes*[b], so well known unto you, whom I esteem as *a* dear *brother*; concur in writing this epistle. *To the church of God, which is in* the rich, populous, and learned city of *Corinth*, whose chief glory it is that they, (if they are what their Christian profession speaks them to be,) are *sanctified in* vital union with *Christ Jesus*,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ

2

a *Called* [*to be*] *an apostle.*] There is great propriety in every clause of the *salutation* prefixed to this *epistle*; and particularly in this, as there were those in the *church* of Corinth who affected to call the *authority* of his *mission* into question.

b *Sosthenes.*] This was a *Corinthian minister* who attended Paul in his travels; Compare Acts xviii. 17. It was both humility and prudence in the *apostle*, thus to join *his* name with his own, in an *epistle* in which it was necessary to deal so plainly with them, and to remonstrate against so many irregularities.

c *Sanctified*

SECT. i.

Jesus, [c] as well as *called* with an external vocation, by which they are separated from the rest of the world, [*as*] *the saints of God*. *And* when we express our affectionate regard to you, and our good wishes for your edification and comfort, we extend them *to all, that in every place*[d] *invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*[e], whom we, and all true Christians, join in acknowledging and adoring as *their* [*Lord*] *and ours*. May you experimentally know more of the privileges and blessings of his gospel; and for that purpose, [*may*] *grace and peace* [*be*] *with you*, that abundance of Divine influence, which may establish your peace and multiply your prosperity; even *from God*, the original fountain of all blessings, whom we are now taught to look upon as *our* reconciled and gracious *Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord*, that anointed and exalted Saviour, by whom we receive the adoption, and through whose hands all its blessings are communicated to us.

1 Cor. I. 2.

3

I cannot address you, my dear brethren, without assuring you in the first place, that *I always give* humble *thanks to my God on your account*, whenever I mention you before him in prayer, as I frequently do, *for the* abundant *grace of God given unto you in Christ Jesus*; by virtue of which you have been received into the christian church, and are made ornaments to it. For ever adored be his holy name, *that in all things ye are enriched in him*[f], with a variety of gifts and graces, and particularly, that ye are made copious *in all utterance, and* ready, [*in*] *all knowledge*, of spiritual and Divine things; *As the testimony*

4

5

6

Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

3 Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ:

4 I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God, which is given you by Jesus Christ:

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge.

6 Even as the testimony

c *Sanctified in Christ Jesus.*] I cannot agree with Mr. Locke, in concluding, that this must signify only an *external* separation to the profession of the *true religion*, as the Jews were *externally* a holy people 1 Pet. ii. 8, 9, 10. It seems rather to intimate the persuasion, which he had, that notwithstanding some lamented irregularities among them, which he was faithfully solicitous to reform, they were in the general, a body of *sincere christians*, and the *exceptions* comparatively few.

d *With all that in every place*, &c.] Nothing could better suit the candid and catholic view which Paul was so much concerned to promote in his *epistle*, than this declaration of his good wishes for *every true christian* upon earth, whether Jew or Gentile, *learned* or *unlearned*, Greek or Barbarian. To limit it, as Grotius, L'Enfant, and some others would do, to the Christians in Achaia, is to spoil all the *strength* and *beauty* of the sentiment.

e *Invoke the name*, &c.] This strongly implies, that it might well be taken for granted, that *every true christian* would often pray to Christ, as well as address the Father in his name.

f *That ye are enriched*, &c.] These respectful congratulations, and acknowledgements of the things in which they did really excel, had a most happy *tendency* to soften their minds; and to dispose them the better, to receive the plain reproofs he was going to give them, and which, in their circumstances, *faithful love* extorted from him.

g *Confirmed*

mony of Christ was confirmed in you.

testimony which I bore to the gospel of *Christ*, when I abode so long at Corinth, *was confirmed among you*[g] by such various communications of the Spirit, in consequence of which you became living witnesses of it to all who knew you. SECT. I. 1 Cor. I. 6.

7 So that ye come behind in no gift: waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

So that you are deficient in no gift which can render you useful in his church, while you are *waiting for the* glorious *manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in connection with which, I hope, you will always consider this extraordinary furniture for his service, and improve it so, as to advance your preparation for that day: Still keeping up an humble dependance on him, *who*, if you faithfully apply to him for the continued communication of his almighty aid, *will confirm you to the end*; [*so that*] when so many others shall be condemned, [*ye may be*] presented *blameless* and irreproachable, *in the* great *day of our Lord Jesus Christ*[h]. Fear not, my brethren, but this blessed day will come, and bring with it those glories which we have so long been taught to expect. Fear not, but Divine grace will still be effectual to bear you through all difficulties in your way to it: for *God* [*is*] *faithful, by whom you were called into the communion* and society *of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, that you may participate of the blessings he hath purchased; the grand promises of whose kingdom, ye know, refer to that illustrious day of which I have been speaking. Be therefore courageous and cheerful in the assured expectation of it.

7

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ:

8

9 God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

9

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us remember, that we also are *sanctified in Christ*, and *saints* by our *calling*. Though we are not enriched with such extraordinary endowments as those which were bestowed upon this primitive *Corinthian church*, yet *we call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*; and let it be considered as a band of love to *all* those who join with us to acknowledge him under the character of their *Lord* and their Saviour. Let it engage us to pray, that Ver. 1 2

g *Confirmed among you.*] As they could not but know they had received these *gifts* by the hand of Paul, this *expression* suggests a rational and tender *argument*, to reduce them to their former *affection* to him as their spiritual father.

h [*That ye may be*] *blameless*, &c.] I think it would make a very *low sense of* this, to explain it, as some have done, that they would be preserved, *if blameless*: the *apostle* plainly intends to encourage their *hope* in that *grace* which might enable them so to persevere, that they might be found *blameless*.

SECT. I. that the same *grace and peace* may be *with them from God our Father, and from Christ Jesus our* common *Lord,* which we wish
3 for ourselves.

4, &c. Let our hearts be ever open to such noble sentiments of *Christian love;* not envying the gifts or endowments of others, but rather rejoicing in them, blessing God for them, and praying
6 that they may be largely increased; that so the *testimony of Christ may be confirmed,* by the flourishing state of religion among his followers: than which no confirmation will probably carry a stronger and more affecting conviction into the hearts of those who observe it.

7 To quicken us to this, let us be continually *waiting for the revelation of Jesus Christ;* thinking seriously, how certainly, and how quickly, he will be *revealed from heaven,* to bring us, and all our brethren, to an account for the improvement we make of the various favours he hath conferred upon us; of which, surely to be
9 *called into the fellowship of Christ,* and the participation of spiritual blessings by him, is to be reckoned among the chief.

Let us rejoice in the fidelity of those promises which encourage us to hope, that he whose grace hath called us to a participation of
8 the *gospel,* will *confirm us blameless, even until the day of Christ:* and, as we have such prospects of present support and comfort, and of final and complete salvation from him, let us, like this blessed *apostle,* take a pleasure in sounding forth his name, and in keeping
1—9 up a most affectionate remembrance of him, even of *Jesus Christ our Lord* and our *Saviour,* in our own minds, and in those of our *Christian* brethren.

SECT. II.

The Apostle expresses his great concern on account of the factions in the church of Corinth, of which he had been informed; and expostulates with them, as to the unreasonableness of setting up Christian ministers as heads of parties, when they were under such strong engagements to unite in Christ, as their common Saviour and Master. 1 Cor. i. 10—16.

1 CORINTHIANS I. 10.

SECT. II. I *NOW* hasten to the great things, which I have in view in this address to you: and *I* must first of all *beseech,* as well as exhort *you,* my *brethren, by the* venerable and endearing *name of our*

1 Cor. I. 10.

1 COR. I. 10.

NOW I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak

speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

our Lord Jesus Christ[a], as you desire either to secure his favour, or to advance his cause and interest in the world, *that ye all* endeavour so far as possible to *speak, the same thing*, that is, that you do not unnecessarily *and* unkindly contradict each other, but rather maintain a peaceful unanimous temper; [*that*] *there may be no schisms among you*, nor mutual alienation of affection; *but* [*that*] *ye be all knit together in the same mind, and in the same sentiment*[b]; waving unnecessary controversies, debating those which are necessary with temper and candour, and delighting to speak most concerning those great and excellent things in which as Christians you cannot but be agreed, and which, if duly considered, will cement your hearts to each other in the strictest and most tender bonds.

SECT. ii.

1 Cor. I. 10.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

I urge this with the greater earnestness, *because it hath been certified to me, my brethren, concerning you, by those of Chloe's* [*family*[c],] *that there are* some *contentions among you*, which by no means become the relation wherein you stand to each other, and the regard which you profess to the gospel of Christ. 11

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and

Now this I say and mean by the preceding charge, *that*, if my information be right, there are among you various parties, which avowedly set themselves up, as under different heads, though you are not yet come to an open separation; so that *every one of you* lists himself under one or another of those dividing names which are so unhappily used among you on this occasion. One, for instance, *says, I am for Paul*, admiring the plainness and purity of his doctrine; *and* a second, *I* am *for Apollos*, charmed with the eloquence and beauty of his address; *and* a third, *I* am *for Cephas*, the apostle of the circumcision, who may be well called 12

a *By the* venerable and endearing *name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*] This is beautifully and properly opposed to the various *human* names under which they were so ready to list themselves.

b *In the same mind, and in the same sentiment.*] It was morally *impossible*, considering the diversity of their educations and capacities, that they should *all* agree in opinion; nor could he intend *that*, because he does not urge any argument to reduce them to such an agreement, nor so much as declare, what that *one* opinion was in which he would have them agree The words must therefore express that *peaceful and unanimous temper* which Christians of different opinions *may* and *ought* to maintain towards each other; which will do a much greater honour to the *gospel*, and to human nature, than the most perfect uniformity that can be imagined.

c *Those of Chloe's* [*family.*] Grotius supposes Fortunatus and Achaicus, (mentioned chap. xvi. 17,) to have been her sons.

SECT. ii.

called a foundation-stone in the church, as he maintains so strict a regard to the Mosaic ceremonies, *and* the peculiar privileges of God's ancient people; while a fourth says, *I* am *for Christ*[d], whose superior name, and strict observation of the Mosaic law in his own person, unanswerably testify its perpetual obligation; however any of his ministers may regard, or neglect it.

1 Cor. I. 12. and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.

13 Give me leave now to ask, *Is Christ divided* into as many parties as you are split into, so that each has a distinct Saviour? or is he become only the head of one party of his followers, that his name should thus be appropriated by way of distinction, as if it were to exclude all the rest of his disciples from any relation to him? And on the other hand, (not to introduce the name of my honoured and beloved brethren upon this invidious occasion,) *was* this *Paul*, whom some of you so much extol, *crucified for you*[e]? *Or were you baptized into the name of Paul*; that you should thus affect to wear it as a mark

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 of distinction? Since there have been these unhappy divsions in your society, and my name, among others, has been made use of to such a purpose; *I thank God, that* it so happened in the course of his Providence, that *I baptized none of you, except Crispus*, once the ruler of the synagogue, *and* my worthy friend, the hospita-

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 ble *Gaius*: *Lest any should* have a pretence to *say*, though ever so falsely, *that I* made the waters of baptism, waters of strife; and *had baptized into my own name*[f], or in a view of particular and personal attachment to myself, to the injury of my brethren, or of the Church in ge-

15 Lest any should say, that I had baptized in my own name.

16 neral. I remember, that *I baptized also the family*

16 And I baptized also

d *I* am *for Christ.*] They might, perhaps, be displeased with Peter, for his condescension to the *uncircumcised* at Antioch, (Gal. ii. 12,) which happened long before the *date* of this *epistle*; and might also, as L'Enfant intimates, have valued themselves on having heard Christ preach in his own *person*, during the time of his *ministration* on earth.

e *Was Paul crucified for you?*] As if he had said, Are your obligations *to me* equal, or comparable to those you are under to our *common Master*, to him who died for us upon the *cross?* He mentions *himself*, as it was least invidious to do it; though the application was equally just as to *every other instance.* Compare chap. iii. 6.

f *Lest any should say, I baptized into my own name.*] If any should object, that others might do it for him; it may be answered, that Paul's attendants, (who seem to have been Timothy and Silas, Acts xviii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 19,) were persons of an *established character*, so as to be above such suspicion; that *baptism* was probably administered *too openly* to allow of this; and that the *apostle* herein does as it were, appeal to the *baptized persons* themselves, challenging *any one* of them all to say, that the *ordinance* was administered to him in Paul's name.

also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

family of Stephanas, the first-fruits of Achaia; *and I know not whether I baptized any other* [g]. And indeed, it might very naturally happen, that I should baptize only these few; *for Christ sent me not* so much *to baptize*; which was an office that others of a much inferior rank in the ministry might as well perform; *but to preach the gospel*, and thereby to bring persons to that faith which would entitle them to this appropriate ordinance of Christianity. And I bless God with all my heart, that I have been enabled to do it with such simplicity, fidelity, and success.

SECT. ii.

1 Cor. I. 17.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHILE we live in the midst of so much darkness, and continue obnoxious to so many prejudices and errors, it will be absolutely impossible for us, so *to speak the same thing*, and so perfectly to be *joined in the same mind and judgment*, as that there should be no diversity of opinion, or expression. But let us labour to obey the *apostle's* pathetic exhortation, so far as the imperfection of this mortal state may admit. Let us be *intreated in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that venerable, that endeared, that sacred name, that there be no *schism among us*, no mutual hatred or animosity, no uncharitable contentions, no severe censures of each other. And as we desire that there may not, let us take care, that we do not impose upon our *brethren* indifferent things as necessary; and thereby drive them into a separation for conscience sake; and tempt them, at the same time, by our ill usage, to that bitterness of resentment, which would make them what the mere separation would not, transgressors of this precept; and us *partakers in their sins*.

Ver. 10

On the other hand, let none of us be disposed to dispute merely for the sake of disputing, nor unnecessarily oppose the judgment or

[g] *I know not whether I have baptized any other.*] This expression of *uncertainty* as to such a *fact*, is by no means inconsistent with *inspiration*, in that view and notion of it which I have endeavoured to state and vindicate in *my discourse on that subject*, in the present volume of this work. I can by no means think with Bishop Burnet, that the reason, why Paul *baptized* so few, was, because *baptism* was delayed till some considerable time after *conversion* to Christianity, and that the *apostle* did not stay so long in a place as to do it; (*Burnet on the Articles, Art.* xxvii. p. 304, *Edit.* 1699;) for it does not appear to me, that *baptism*, in these earliest and purest ages, was *long* delayed; and it is certain, that this cause could not take place *here*, as Paul continued at Corinth 18 months. I rather think the office was generally assigned to *inferiors*, as requiring no extraordinary abilities; and as being attended with some trouble and inconvenience, especially where *immersion* was used, as I suppose it often, though not constantly, was.

SECT. ii. or taste of our brethren, out of an affectation of singularity, or a spirit of contention. But let us rather labour, so far as with a safe conscience we can, to keep the *unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* And while we do this, if our brethren will exact such submissions from us, as they are not warranted by God to require, and as we cannot in conscience pay, let us follow conscience whithersoever it leads us; taking all necessary care, that it be rightly guided; and if in that circumstance our *brethren will cast us out, and say, Let the Lord be glorified;* and if to the rest of their unkindness, they will add the farther injury of branding us with the odious names of *schismatics,* or of *heretics;* let it be a *light thing to us, to be judged of man's judgment.* Let us not render *railing for railing, nor injury for injury,* but rather, by our meekness, endeavour to overcome their severity; and wait for that happy time, when more of the spirit of knowledge and of charity, shall dispose them to throw down those *middle walls of partition,* by which the *temple of God* is straitened and defaced, and the convenience, the symmetry, and grandeur of its original plan, so lamentably spoiled. Above all, let us wait that day, *when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest;* and that world, where they, who *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,* shall retain no remembrance of the controversies that once divided them; unless it be to balance the alienations of time with the endearments of eternity.

In the mean while, let *us* avoid, as much as possible, a *party-spirit;* and not be fond of listing ourselves under the *name* of this, or that man, how wise, how good, how great soever. For surely if the names of *Peter,* and *Paul,* were in this view to be declined, much more are those, which, in these latter days, have so unhappily crumbled the *Christian* and *Protestant* interest, and have given such sad occasion to our enemies to reproach us, *Christ is not divided:* nor were *Luther,* or *Calvin,* or even *Peter,* or *Paul, crucified for us; nor were we baptized into any of their names.* Ver. 12, 13

Happy shall that disciple of our compassionate Lord be, whom he shall most eminently own in *healing the breaches* which the artifices of the tempter, too often abetted by the infirmities of *Christ's* faithful servants, have already made in the Church, and which the great enemy is continually endeavouring to multiply, and to widen! Happy he, who reverencing and loving his Master's image wherever he sees it, shall teach others to do so too! And who, being himself an example of *yielding,* so far as he conscientiously can, and of not taking upon him to censure others, where he cannot yield to them, shall do his part towards *cementing,* in the bonds of holy love, all the children of God, and the members

members of *Christ!* How unsuccessful soever his efforts may be, amidst that angry and contentious, that ignorant and bigotted crowd, who miscall themselves *Christians;* or by whatever suspicious and reproachful names his *moderation* may be stigmatized; his Divine *Master* will neither fail to consider it in its true view, nor to honour it with proportionable tokens of his acceptance and favour. *Love* is the first and greatest of his commands; and after all the clamour that has been made about notions and forms, he who practises and teaches *love* best, shall *be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* SECT. ii.

SECT. III.

The Apostle, knowing that a fond regard to eloquence and philosophy, to which some of their teachers made high pretensions, was one great occasion of their divisions, sets himself to shew how little stress was to be laid upon them; which he illustrates by the choice which God had made of gospel-preachers quite destitute of those accomplishments. 1 Cor. I, 17, *to the end.*

1 Cor. I. 17.

FOR Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

1 Corinthians I. 17.

I JUST now told you that *Christ did not send me to baptize*, as my principal business, *but* rather *to preach the gospel*[a]; and now I must add, that in the commission which I had the honour to receive from him, he did *not* instruct me to preach it *with* those philosophical niceties of expression, or laboured rhetoric, which many are so ready to esteem as the *wisdom of words; lest* if I had attended to these little things, *the cross of Christ should have been* deprived of its just honours, and so have been enervated, and *rendered vain*[b]. For this must have been the natural SECT. iii. 1 Cor. I. 17.

a *Baptize, but to preach.*] As I knew not how to avoid the *repetition* of this *clause*, without prolonging the former *section* beyond due bounds, or making an improper division; I hope the *reader* will excuse it and a few other instances of this kind which will occur.

b *Should have been* enervated, or *rendered vain.*] If the *doctrine* of the *crucifixion of the Son of God* for the sins of men be indeed *true*, it is undoubtedly a truth of the highest importance, and it might reasonably be expected, that a person who had been instructed in it by such *extraordinary* methods, should appear to lay the main stress of his *preaching* upon it. The design of this wonderful *dispensation* might therefore have been in a great measure frustrated, if it had been the care of the *first preachers* of it, and particularly of Paul, to study a vain parade of words, and to set off their discourses with those glittering ornaments which the *Grecian orators* so often sought, and which the Corinthians were so ready to affect. But amidst all the beautiful simplicity which a deep conviction of the *gospel* tended to produce, there was room left for the most manly

SECT. iii.

natural consequence, when men saw one who pretended to know so much, and to have received such extraordinary discoveries of the gospel, and of Christ crucified as its great foundation, seeming not so much to trust to the grand important facts he averred, as to artificial reasonings, or ornaments of speech, in his manner of representing them to the world.

1 Cor. i. 17.

18 I might well be cautious on this head; *for the doctrine of the cross is indeed folly*, with respect *to* the judgment of *them that are perishing;* to wretched creatures, who are in the way to be for ever undone. They, in that fatal madness, which leads them to speedy ruin, think it a ridiculous and mean thing, to expect salvation from one who seemed unable to save himself; and glory from one that expired in ignominy. *But to us who are saved* from the contagion of so wicked an age, and are in the way to everlasting salvation, *it is* a most illustrious display of *the power of God*, to the noblest purposes our

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

19 minds can conceive. *For it is written*, and the words are remarkably applicable to this great event, (Isa. xxix. 14,) *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and abolish the sagacity of the prudent;* thus hath God, by this dispensation, poured confusion on human wit and learning, elo-

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 quence and philosophy: So that, in allusion to other words of the same prophet, we may say[c], (Isa. xxxiii. 18,) *Where* [*is*] *the* celebrated sage, whose *wise* counsel and penetrating genius have been held in greatest esteem? *Where the* learned *scribe? Where the* ostentatious *disputer of this world*[d], who hath been most admired

20 Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath

manly and noble kind of eloquence; which therefore the *Christian preacher* should labour to make habitual to him, and of which this *apostle* himself is a most illustrious example.

c In allusion to other words of the same prophet we may say.] I think it would be a very unnecessary labour, to endeavour to prove that these words are an *exact* translation of the passage referred to: or to shew that passage to be a *prophecy* of the success of the *gospel*. The context in Isa. xxxiii. refers to the deliverance of Judea from Sennacherib; and the 18th *verse* describes the Jews as reviewing and meditating on the terror into which they had been thrown; and then crying out in a noble exultation over all the baffled schemes of the enemy; *Where is the scribe*, that mustered the forces? *Where the receiver*, or pay-master, who distributed money or stores among them? *Where the engineer*, that *counted the towers*, to determine where the attack might most conveniently be made? In a bold and beautiful *allusion* to, and imitation of these words, though with very different ideas, the *apostle* proceeds, in the animated *clause* that follows, to *triumph* over the oppositions of *human* science in its various forms, when levelled against God's *victorious gospel*.

d Sage, *scribe, disputer.*] Notwithstanding all the learned pains which Dr. *Fuller*, in his *Miscellanies*, (*Lib.* III. *cap.* 7;) or *Godwin*, in his *Hebrew Antiquities*, (*Lib.* II. *cap.* 6,) have taken to prove, that

hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

red for the subtility of his reasoning, and accuracy of his distinctions? As God of old delivered his people, in spite of all the proud preparations and insolent boastings of the Assyrians, not by their own counsels or arms, but by his almighty power; so doth he now conduct his grand design for the immortal happiness of his chosen. Look upon the dispensation of the gospel as now administered, and say, *hath not God made the wisdom of this world* appear to be *foolish*, and vain, when the highest results of it are compared with those great effects which he knows how to produce without it, and even in opposition to it all. *For* it is indeed so: *since in the wisdom of God*, in the midst of the most stupendous displays of the Divine wisdom with which they were always surrounded, *the world*, by all the improvements of its boasted *wisdom*, *knew not* the living and true *God*, but run into the wildest and most absurd sentiments that can be imagined concerning the Deity; (some of them absolutely denying it, and others representing it under the most monstrous notions and forms) when this I say was generally the case, *it pleased God, by* that which they have impiously ridiculed as *the* most egregious *folly of preaching*, by preaching, which is indeed destitute of all the wisdom of which they boast, *to save* multitudes; and those, not such as are the most artful cavillers, or the most sagacious reasoners; but *those that* with honest simplicity and plainness of heart, *believe* what is credibly testified to them, and taught by a superior authority.

sect. iii.

1 Cor. I. 20.

21 For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

21

22 For the Jews require

For whereas the Jews demand a sign [e] from heaven

22

that these *three words* refer to *three orders* of learned men among the Jews—the *natural philosopher*, and *the literal*, and the *allegorical interpreter of scripture*; I rather think the apostle meant to include persons most eminent for their learning and sagacity, whether among Jews or Gentiles. The *sages* of the latter, and *scribes* of the former, are well known; and the disputer of the age may include such of both, as, proud of their natural sagacity, were fond of engaging in controversies, and fancied they could confute every adversary. If, as Mr. Locke supposes, the chief leader of the faction against St. Paul, (whom that learned and ingenious writer stiles *the false apostle*,) called himself a *scribe*, there will be a peculiar propriety in the use of the word here; but without that supposition, it might easily be understood by the Corinthians, who had so considerable a *synagogue* of Jews among them.

e *The Jews demand a sign*, &c.] When we consider how many miracles were continually wrought by, and upon the *first* preachers and converts of Christianity, this may seem an astonishing demand! but from a memorable passage in Josephus in which he speaks of an *impostor*, promising his *followers* to shew them a *sign* of their being set at liberty from the Roman yoke, compared with their requiring from Christ, amidst their full torrent of his miracles, a sign from heaven; I am led to conclude, that the sense given in the paraphrase is the genuine interpretation of this much controverted passage.

See

SECT. iii.

heaven to introduce a Messiah, who shall establish a temporal kingdom, victorious over all their enemies; *and the Greeks seek* a depth of *wisdom* and philosophy, or the ornaments of eloquence, and charms of address; *We nevertheless*, conscious of our high commission, and faithful to our important trust, without regarding at all the unreasonable and petulant demands of either, go on plainly to *preach Christ crucified; to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block*[f], being most directly contrary to all their secular expectations; *and foolishness* in the abstract *to the Greeks*[g], who treat it as a low and idle tale, hardly worth the least degree of notice; *But to those who are* by Divine grace effectually *called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ*, amidst all the dishonours of his cross, is known and acknowledged as *the power of God, and the wisdom of God;* to the converted Jews his mission is confirmed by miraculous evidence, and the accomplishment of prophecies, far more important than any event which their carnal brethren expect; and the believing Gentile finds it infinitely fuller of Divine wisdom and goodness to a lost world, than any system of philosophy that was ever invented. And well may they thus judge, *because* what *the* world profanely censures as a *folly* most unworthy *of God*[h], *is* and in its effects appears to be, incomparably *wiser than* all the projects which the wit of *men* can devise; *and* what it impiously insults, as *the weakness of* Christian teachers, which it charges them with falsely ascribing to *God*, being really his own work, will be found to be *stronger than* all

1 Cor. I. 22. quire a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

See *the paraphrase and note on* Mat. xii. 38, Vol. VI. p. 330: and Mat. xvi. 1. p. 456.

f *To the Jews indeed a stumbling-block.*] It is well known, that nothing exposed Christianity more to the contempt of the Jews than the doctrine of the *cross*, they therefore called Christ in derision, תלוי *Tolvi, the man that was hanged*, that is, on the *cross*; and Christians, אבדי הלוי *Abde toivi, the disciples of the crucified malefactor*; and by a *paronomasia*, or malignant playing on the word, they called, ευαγγελιον אוון גלון *Aven gelon, a revelation of vanity. See Leigh's Critica Sacra in loc.*

g *To the Greeks foolishness.*] It is well known how profanely Lucian insults the Christians, on worshipping a *crucified impostor*; and many of the *fathers* speak of the same reproach. Archbishop Tillotson appears to have given credit to the charge brought against the Jesuits, who to avoid the like offence of the Chinese, denied that *Christ was crucified*, and represented it, as an invention of the Jews to asperse Christianity. *Tillotson's Works*, Vol. II p. 284.

h *The folly of God*, &c.] As it is absolutely impossible that there should be either *folly* or *weakness* in God, so it is certain that the world did not in general believe that there was; and consequently these *strong phrases* must be used in a very peculiar sense, and must mean that *scheme*, which was really *his*, though the world, for want of understanding it, represented it as *weakness* and *folly* unworthy of God.

all the efforts which *men* can make, either to reform the world any other way, or to obstruct the prevalency and success of this and this is the necessary consequence of its being indeed Divine.

1 Cor. I. 25.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble *are called;*

And *for* the farther illustration of this thought, let me call you to *behold*, and seriously to contemplate *your calling*[i], *brethren*; consider the state of your fellow-Christians in general, snd even of those who are employed as ministers of the gospel, and you will perceive [*there are*] *not many wise according to the flesh*, according to those maxims which a sensual world governs itself by, in its principles of secular policy; there are *not many mighty* heroes renowned for their martial courage, there are *not many* of *noble* birth and illustrious rank among men to be found on their list. *But God hath chosen* those that are reputed *the foolish things of the world, that he may shame the wise* men of whom it is most ready to boast; *and the weak things of the world*, who pretend to no extraordinary strength or valour, *hath God chosen, that he may*, by their heroic patience under the severest sufferings, *shame its mighty things*, which have never been able with all their boasted fierceness, to equal that meek fortitude with which we trace the footsteps of the Lamb of God: *And ignoble things of the world hath God chosen, and things* most commonly and scornfully *set at nought*[k] among men; yea, *and things which are not*[l] in the least regarded, but overlooked as if they had no being, and were below contempt itself, hath God chosen, *that he may abolish* and annihilate *things that are* in in the highest esteem, and make the most illustrious figure among the children of men; *That* his great end of humbling us might be more effectually secured, and that *no flesh might boast* of any advantages or distinctions *in his presence.*

26

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty:

27

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are;

28

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

29

i *Your calling.*] L'Enfant readers it, *those among you, who are called;* which, with many other passages in this version, retains the sense, but departs from the exactness of St. Paul's expression.

k *Things set at nought.*] Agreeable to this, the Danish missionaries tell us, that most of the Malabarian converts were the poorest of the people; the poets and wits, who valued themselves upon their genius, learning, and politeness, despising the *gospel*, and doing their utmost to oppose its progress See Nieuchamp's excellent *history* of this important *mission.*

l *Things which are not.*] Dr. Whitby shews here, how well this represents the supreme contempt in which the Jews held the Gentiles. Compare Deut. xxxii. 21; Isa. xl. 17.

m *Wisdom,*

SECT. iii.

sence. *For* on the whole, all we have that is worth mentioning, we receive from Christ; and we receive it from him as the gift of God, since it is *of him*, and his free mercy and grace, that *ye are* called to share *in* the blessings given by *Christ Jesus* his Son. He exhibits this blessed Saviour to us, and disposes our hearts to accept of him, *who*, amidst our ignorance and folly, *is made of God unto us* a source of *wisdom; and* through him, guilty as we are, we receive *righteousness;* polluted as we are, we obtain *sanctification; and* inslaved as we naturally are to the power of our lusts, and the dominion of Satan, we obtain by him complete *redemption* [m].

1 Cor. I. 30.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 So *that* we may now indeed boast of our happy change, in whatever point of light it be considered; but it is a boast not of insolent presumption, but humble gratitude; *as it is written*, (Jer. ix. 23, 24; Isa. lxv. 16.) "*He that boasteth, let him boast in the Lord*, and in this, that he knoweth me who exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth."

31 That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 17 MAY Divine grace form the taste of ministers, and their hearers, more to this doctrine of Christ crucified! May he every where be preached; and that be accounted the truest *wisdom of words* by which *his cross* may become most efficacious. There cannot be surely a more evident demonstration of folly, or a more dread- 18 ful token of approaching ruin, than despising the *wisdom of God, and the power of God.* If we are ever shaken by that contempt for the gospel, which so many are continually ready in our age to express, let us recollect what glorious effects it hath produced; whilst, in the midst of such illustrations of the *wisdom of God,* 21 *the world by all its wisdom knew not its Maker;* how many believers have been saved, how many by believing are daily brought 20 into the way of salvation? In this view let us triumphantly say, *Where is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world;* what has wisdom, learning, disputation done, in comparison of what the plain and simple doctrine of a crucified Saviour has wrought, and is continually working? Let us earnestly pray, that God would, by the power of his grace, disperse the prejudices of men; that the 23 Jews may not so *demand a sign*, as that Christ crucified should be

a

m *Wisdom, righteousness,* &c.] Bos would render the words, *for of him, (in Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us wisdom, ye are righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,* that is, completely justified, sanctified, and redeemed.

a *The*

a *stumbling-block* to them, nor the most learned of the Gentiles so *seek after science*, as that the *wisdom of God* should seem *foolishness to them*; but that both may join in feeling, and owning, how *Divinely wise*, and how *Divinely powerful*, the dispensation of the gospel is. SECT. iii. Ver. 24

Let us not be offended with our *calling*, though so few of the *wise*, the *mighty*, and the *noble*, partake of its benefits. If God hath *chosen the weak things*, they shall *confound the mighty; and the foolish*, they shall *shame the wise*. Never shall we find ourselves truly happy, till we come to feel that we are naturally foolish and guilty, polluted and enslaved; and that our *wisdom* and *righteousness*, our *sanctification and redemption*, are in Christ, who is *made unto us of God all* this, and indeed *all in all*. Then shall we know, and not till then, what true glory means, even when we can abase ourselves to the dust in his presence, and have learned only to *glory in the Lord*. 26 27 30

SECT. IV.

The Apostle farther illustrates the reasons for which he had declined all ostentation of eloquence, when he came among the Corinthians; and particularly insists on the extraordinary nature of the facts and doctrines he was to teach; which were of a much higher original than any discoveries which human wit or learning could make, and were to be traced up to the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit; their nature being so wonderful, that it was difficult for the corrupted minds of men to receive them, even when they were taught. 1 COR. II. 1, *to the end.*

1 COR. II. 1.

AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

1 CORINTHIANS II. 1.

I HAVE observed that the design of God in the gospel is of a very humbling nature, admirably calculated to stain the pride of human glory, and bring men to boast in him alone. *And* with truth and pleasure, *I* can say to you, my *brethren*, that in perfect harmony with this wise and excellent scheme, *when I* first *came among you*, I *came not with the pomp of language*[a], *or* worldly *wisdom*, with the laboured charms of eloquence, or philosophy; for I remembered, that SECT. iv. 1 Cor. II. 1.

[a] *The pomp of language.*] This certainly alludes to the vain affectation of sublimity and subtilty so common among the Greeks of that age, and very remote from the true eloquence in which (as was observed above) our *apostle* did so remarkably excel. L'Enfant thinks, he refers to his not being perfectly master of the Greek language in all its purity and elegance with which the Corinthians spoke it; but I prefer the former sense, as more suitable to the *original*.

SECT. iv.

1 Cor. II. 1.

that I was *declaring to you* no human invention, which needed or admitted such ornaments or recommendations, but was exhibiting *the testimony of God* to a plain fact, for which I produced authentic evidence by visible Divine operations. I therefore endeavoured to exhibit it in as intelligible a way as I could, and treated it as one who believed that it really came from God, and so needed not the varnishing of human art. *For I* was previously *determined* in my mind, *that* fond as I knew you were of refined speculation, and polite address, *I would* appear to *know*[b], and employ myself to make known, *nothing among you*[c], *but Jesus* as the *Christ*, the great promised Messiah of the Jews, *even that crucified person*[d], against whom so many scandals are raised. Yet did I resolve steadily to maintain the doctrine of his cross, and endeavour to exalt its honours wherever I came, not excepting your opulent and polite city. *And* to this plan you know I resolutely adhered, though *I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling*; for I knew I had enemies about me on every side, (Acts xviii. 6, 9.) and laboured under natural disadvantages, (2 Cor. x. 10.) and the force of the prejudice which I had to encounter was strong. *And* you well know, that *my speech* in private, *and my preaching* in public, [*was*] *not in the persuasive discourses of human wisdom*[e], eloquence or philosophy, nor with that pomp and sophistry of argument which the learned men of the world are so ready to affect. *But* far from being contemptible on that account, it had other much nobler recommendations: for it was *in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*, by the most convincing evidence, arising, both from the prophecies of the Old Testament inspired by the Holy Ghost, and

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling:

4 And my speech, and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power:

b Appear to *know*.] In that sense, the word γινωσκω, is used by *Pindar*, (*Olymp.* xiii.) and it is most natural to give it that *signification* here.

c *Among you.*] There seems a peculiar *emphasis* in this expression; as if the *apostle* had said, I did not change my usual method at Corinth, and you know with what glorious success it was attended.

d *even that crucified person*: και τουτον εσταυρωμενον] The Jews and heathens probably gave Christ this name by way of contempt; but St Paul declares, that instead of concealing this as an infamy and scandal, it was the *main* thing he insisted upon; as indeed all the most important doctrines of the *gospel* stand in a close and natural connection with it. And no doubt but he took them in that connection; for he refers in the course of these *epistles*, to several doctrines relating to the *Father*, and the *Holy Spirit*, as what he had taught them, though not expressly included in the doctrine of the *crucifixion*.

e *Persuasive discourses of human wisdom.*] This seems to be the just rendering of the expression πιθοις ανθρωπινης σοφιας λογοις, and so, I think, it is rendered by the celebrated Archbishop of Cambray.

f Politicians

and from the miraculous energy which he hath exerted in and by the apostles, and other ministers of the New. And on this I laid the whole stress; *that your faith should not depend on the wisdom*, reason, or address *of men; but on the power of God*, a much surer foundation, which shews how little reason you have to value yourselves on any appearance of the former.

SECT. IV.

1 Cor. II. 5.

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.

Nevertheless, though we want what is commonly called human wisdom, yet *we speak* the truest and most excellent *wisdom among those who are perfect:* and if I may so express it, completely initiated into these Divine mysteries; such well instructed and experienced souls will bear witness to its incomparable excellence. *But* we speak *not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world:* nor that which is admired and sought by the great politicians of the age, whether Jews or Gentiles, *who nevertheless shall* soon *be brought down* and abolished, shall find difficult and dreadful scenes arising, in which all their boasted sagacity and penetration will be of no avail[f]. *But we*, taught of God to despise the transient vanities which delude them, *speak* what must be infinitely more worthy your most attentive consideration and regard: for it is *the wisdom of God* himself *in a mystery:* that mysterious wisdom, *which was* long *hidden* and entirely unknown, and now appears to contain wonders which no understanding of man or angel can fully penetrate; even that wisdom *which God from eternal ages*[g] *pre-determined* in the secret of his own all-comprehending mind, *for*

6

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

7

f Politicians of the age, &c.] Mr. Locke insists upon it, as an observation of great importance, that αιων ουτος generally signifies *the Jewish œconomy;* and supposes that the *apostle* here also aims a silent stroke at the *Jewish teacher* that set himself up in opposition to him, and refers to the approaching destruction of the Jews by the Romans. And Mr. L'Enfant agrees with this, only explaining it of the learned rabbies of their synagogues. But as the *Jewish magistrates*, or scribes, were not the only princes in crucifying Christ, (compare Acts iv. 27,) and as the word αιων, has sometimes undoubtedly a more extensive signification, (compare Rom. xii. 2; Gal. i. 4; Eph. ii. 2; chap. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 12; and even in *this epistle*, chap. iii. 18, and the *next chapter*, iv. 4;) and as St. Paul's observation here may so well be applied to Gentile, as well as Jewish princes, I saw no reason for limiting the sense, which I never choose to do, without some apparent necessity. On the same principle, I have receded from Mr. Locke's interpretation of the next *verse.*

g *From eternal ages.*] To what I have just said of my reasons for not interpreting this of the time of setting up the *Jewish œconomy*, I must add, that it signifies little, to endeavour to bring such expressions down to any period of time. If it be granted, that they intend any thing previous to the existence of those to whom they refer, the same difficulties will still lie in the way; nor is it possible to avoid them.

SECT. IV.

for the great purposes of *our* final salvation and *glory*[h]. A wisdom this, *which none of the* Jewish *rulers of this* our *age*, or of the heathen that were concerned in it, *knew; for if they had* indeed *known* [*it*,] *they would not by any means*[i] *have* presumed to have *crucified* one so greatly their superior, as *the Lord of glory*; wicked as they were, they would for their own sakes have been afraid to attack the Son of God, his long promised Messiah, had they been thoroughly apprized of his high character and dignity. *But* [*this is*] *as it is written*[k], (Isa. lxiv. 4,) when the prophet, speaking of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, says, *Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, what* glorious *things God hath prepared for them that love him.* Nor had the generality of mankind, or even the people who enjoyed the benefit of the Jewish scripture, any just conception of the nature of this sublime plan, and the method by which it was to be accomplished. *But God hath revealed* [*them*] *to us* Christians, and especially to us his apostles, *by* the extraordinary inspiration of *his Spirit*, who intimately and fully knows them: *for the Spirit searcheth* and penetrates *all things, even the deep things of God*, the profoundest mysteries of his counsels, and his gospel. (Compare Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. i. 9; chap. iii. 3, 5, 7.) And well may he be acquainted with all these things; *for who of mankind knoweth the things of a man*, the secret recesses of his mind, on many occasions, and in many circumstances, *unless it be the spirit of a man which is in him*[l], which knows it by consciousness, to a degree of certainty which no observation

1 Cor. II. 8.

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

h *Our* final salvation and *glory.*] L'Enfant explains this, of the *glory of the apostles*, in being appointed to publish this revelation; but the sense we have given equally suits the phrase, and is much more sublime and important,

i *Not by any means.*] οὐκ ἂν, is an expression which seems to have this force. Compare Luke xxiii. 34.

k *As it is written*, &c.] The context in Isa. lxiv. may well be explained, to express *the Church's earnest desire of the manifestation of the glories of the Messiah's kingdom*; and I think it more probable, that this is a *quotation* of those words, with some little variation, than that it refers to a passage said to have been found in an *apocryphal* book ascribed to Elijah, (which probably was a *forgery* of much later *date* than this time,) where these words are indeed extant, being perhaps transcribed from St. Paul.

l *The spirit of a man.*] I do not apprehend that the distinction between the *soul* and *spirit*, to which some refer these words, is of great importance in the interpretation of them. They must signify the *perfect acquaintance* with all the Divine schemes and purposes which the *Holy Spirit* has, and which the *apostle's* argument directly proves, that no creature can have: so that it seems a glorious proof of the *Deity* of the *Spirit*, and has accordingly been urged as such, by all who have defended that important doctrine.

m *Those*

SECT. iv.

observation or reasoning can produce in another; *so also no one knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God* himself, who is intimately conscious of all, and can conceal, or discover, whatever he pleases. 1 Cor. II. 11.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Now this is entirely to the present purpose; 12
for *the spirit, which we have received, is not that of the world,* nor do we govern ourselves by those carnal views which engross and enslave so great a part of mankind; *but* we have received in large and liberal supplies, *that Spirit, which is from God,* and which is the noblest of his gifts to the children of men, by which their minds are both informed and regulated; *that* so *we might* both notionally and experimentally *know the things which are freely given us by God: Which we also* make it our business to 13
speak, and to communicate to others, *not in words dictated by human wisdom,* to excite men's curiosity, amuse their imaginations, or gain their applause; *but in those dictated by the Holy Spirit*[m]; and consequently best adapted to convey such ideas as he would impart, and to impress the hearts and consciences of men, with a reverent and deep sense of those holy mysteries: and this we do with all serious care and attention, *explaining such spiritual* and sublime *things by spiritual*[n] [*words,*] suggested by him as best adapted to them. *But* in the mean time, vain 14
and foolish men find a great deal in our preaching to cavil at, and object against. And it is no wonder they do; for *the animal man*[o], who continues under the influence of his appetites and passions, and is a stranger to the noble exercises and principles of the Divine life, *receiveth not,* with any inward relish or sense, *the things of the Spirit of God,* which are too sublime and refined for his low, corrupted and degenerate taste, *for* in proportion to the degree in

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;

m *Those dictated by the Holy Spirit.*] This expression may certainly convince us, of the great regard which we ought always to maintain to the *words of scripture;* and may especially teach *ministers* how attentively they should study its beauties, and how careful they should be to make it the support of their discourses.

n *Explaining spiritual things,* &c.] This sense of συγκρινοντες occurs, Gen. xl. 8; and Numb. xv. 34, in the *Seventy.*

o *The animal man.*] Without examining all that the learned and judicious Dr. Owen hath said one way on this *text,* or Dr. Claget, and Dr. Stebbing another, I have taken that which seems to me the due medium, and for the farther vindication of this exposition, must refer to *Clifford,* in the 2d *volume* of the *Phœnix,* p. 514, and to *my third letter to the Author of Christianity not founded on Argument,* only reminding my reader, that this very word ψυχικος is rendered *sensual* Jam. iii. 15; Jude, ver. 19.

p *Who*

sect. iv. in which *they are* full of Divine Wisdom, they will appear *foolishness to him; neither can he* rightly *know* [*them,*] whilst he continues in his present state, and under such unhappy prejudices as these, *for they are spiritually discerned,* and a man must have a spiritual taste, formed by the influences of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, before he will thoroughly enter into their excellence. *But the spiritual man,* whose heart, illuminated and sanctified by the Divine Spirit, is set on spiritual and noble objects, *discerneth all things* about him rightly, *while he himself is discerned by no man;* by none of those who are most forward and heady in their censures; but remains like a man endowed with sight, among those born blind, who are incapable of apprehending what is clear to him, and amidst their own darkness cannot participate of, nor understand, those beautiful ideas and pleasing sensations which light pours upon him.

1 Cor. II. 14. God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 And surely, if you consider matters aright, you cannot much wonder at this. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord,* or *who hath instructed him*[p]? There must undoubtedly be in the Divine counsels, many secret and hidden things, and a man must have a mind, capacious as that of the blessed God himself, to take upon him to judge of his schemes, and arraign his conduct. *But we,* even I Paul, and my brother apostles, *have the mind of Christ*[q], who is the incarnate wisdom of God himself; and therefore we are not to be called to the bar of those who arrogantly pretend, merely on the foot of human reason, to censure us, as some of your presumptuous teachers do, to their own shame, and the detriment of those that hearken to their suggestions.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 2 LET it be the resolution of every *Christian,* and especially the *determination* of every minister, with *St. Paul, to know nothing but*

p *Who hath instructed him.*] Some good interpreters, and particularly Mr. Pyle and Dr. Guyse, explain this of the *spiritual man;* but it seems more agreeable to the construction, and its connection with what follows, by *him,* to understand *God.*

q *We have the mind of Christ.*] This part of the *epistle* is very artificially conducted. He is now aiming at the great point of *establishing his authority* which had been suspected amongst them; yet he does not directly propose, but obliquely insinuate arguments against such suspicions; arguments which might possess their minds before they were aware of what he intended to effect by them. This important remark will often present itself to the attentive reader of *St. Paul's epistles.*

but Jesus Christ, even him that was crucified: to esteem this the most important of all knowledge, to cultivate it in their own minds, and endeavour to propagate it to others. With this Divine science, shall those ministers of the *gospel*, who knew least of the *excellency of speech* and *the enticing words of man's wisdom*, do more important things for the reformation of the world, and the salvation of souls, than without it, the greatest masters of language, or adepts in philosophy, will ever be able to effect. Let the *princes of this world* boast of the knowledge and refined policy which is so soon *to perish*, by which so many of their subjects perish, and sometimes themselves before their time. In how many instances does it leave them to imitate the destructive maxims of those, who, under pretence of public good, but really under the instigation of the basest private passions, *crucified Jesus*, the adorable Saviour, *the Lord of glory*.

SECT. iv.

1

6

8

May God teach us more of *that hidden wisdom* which they who are truly initiated into real *Christianity* know, and which opens upon us views and hopes, beyond *what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or it hath* particularly and fully *entered into the heart of man* to conceive. There is no need we should distinctly conceive it. It is enough that we know in the general, it is what *God hath prepared for them that love him;* which consideration may surely teach us to trample under our feet that which he so often bestows on them who *hate him*, and are abhorred by him; on those with *whom he is angry every day*.

9

May that *Spirit, which searcheth all things, even the hidden things of God*, give us more deeply and affectionately to *know the things which are freely given us of God*, and to adore that free grace from which we receive them! These things we learn with the highest advantage from the holy scriptures, where they are delivered *in words which the Holy Ghost taught:* in words therefore, the most admirably adapted to express those spiritual and sublime ideas they were intended to communicate: In which words consequently, we learn to speak of the things of God with the exactest propriety and the truest edification.

12

13

May we be enabled *spiritually to discern them*, with whatever contempt they may be treated by *natural*, that is, by *animal* men; by those, who, though conceited of their rational powers, can relish little or nothing but what relates to this low and sensual life. Conscious of that inward *discerning*, which discovers *all things* to us in their true light, even things of infinite importance, may we pity that undiscerning rashness of blind arrogance and pride, with which some, who think themselves the wisest in proportion to the degree in which they are the most wretched of mankind, may treat us, and not only us, but that *gospel* which is our glory and our joy

14

15

SECT. IV. joy. *We have the mind of Christ* delivered to us by his holy *apostles*, who were intimately and miraculously instructed in it.

16 Let us humbly *receive* the oracles they deliver; and whilst others are presuming haughtily to censure them, may we think ourselves happy, if, with meek subjection to their unerring authority, we may sit at the feet of such teachers, and regulate our lives by their instructions!

SECT. V.

The Apostle reproves the carnality of the Corinthians, in contending about human teachers, and urges many important considerations to cure them of so unbecoming a temper. 1 Cor. III. 1—9.

1 CORINTHIANS III. 1.

1 Cor. III. 1. AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

SECT. V. I HAVE been speaking of that great plainness with which I addressed myself to you when I came to preach the gospel among you at Corinth; *and I* hope, my *brethren*, you will not despise me for it: for truly, as it became my character as an apostle of Christ, so it suited yours, as being under the power of prejudices, which so far prevailed, that even when you were converted to the profession of Christianity, I *could not speak unto you as unto spiritual* persons, who had made any attainments in religion, proportionable to the illuminations and influences of the Spirit, which you had received: *but* was obliged in many instances to address you, *as* those who were still in too great a measure, *carnal* in your temper and views, and therefore were but *as babes in Christ*[a], and beginners in the Divine life. I might have said sublimer things, and in a more elevated manner; but found so much pride and faction among you, that it was necessary to insist much upon the plain and fundamental doctrines of the cross, rather than on things, which, if they might have suited your inclinations better, would have

1 Cor. III. 1.

2 suited your circumstances less. *I* was forced to preach to you, as to persons weak as infants; and so *feed you with milk*[b], which I did as it were

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto

a *Babes in Christ.*] By explaining this of *beginners in the Divine life*, or such as had made but little proficiency in it, we reconcile this with those passages which speak of the *eminency* of their gifts. 1 Cor. i. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 7.

b *Fed you with milk.*] The word ἐπότισα exactly signifies, *I gave you to drink*; but as that rendering would not suit the other word with which it is connected, *strong meat*, I thought it best to retain our *version*. Parallel instances to this manner of

SECT V.

were pour into your mouths with a tenderness, like that of a mother, or a nurse, when feeding her sucking child; *and* could *not* conveniently feed you with *strong meat.* I waved discoursing on some of those doctrines which left room for the curiosities of sublimer speculation, and admitted of the greatest ornaments of discourse[c], *because ye were not* then *able* [*to bear it;*] *nor* indeed *are ye yet able;* as I perceive by the account which our brethren give of your present state. *For* it evidently appears, by what I hinted above, that *ye are yet carnal,* still under the influence of weak, and indeed sinful prejudices. I appeal to your own consciences on this occasion *for* the proof of this: *while* [*there is*] *emulation, and contention, and factions among you, are you not* indeed *carnal? and do ye not walk* and conduct yourselves, *as* unregenerate *men* do? So that by this behaviour, a stranger would not know that you were Christians, or see any thing in you above uninstructed and unsanctified nature. *For when* you eagerly contend about the honours of this or that teacher, and set him up as the head of a distinguishing party; so that *one says, I am for Paul, and another, I* am *for Apollos*[d], I admire the sublime sentiments of the one, and I the fine language and address of the other; *are ye not carnal?* and do ye not talk in the spirit of your heathen neighbours, who have their favourite philosophers and orators too? And is this language for Christians? *Who then is Paul? and who* [*is*] *Apollos?* For what reason do you regard either the one or the other? Is it for no consideration *but* that of talents, which they have in common with many who are strangers to the gospel? Or ought it not rather to be in a different view? even

1 Cor. III. 2.

thereto ye were not able *to bear it,* neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal; for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I *am* of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the

of expression are produced by Mr. *Blackwall,* in his *Sacred Classics,* Vol. I. p. 72.

c Ornaments of discourse.] If any think that the use of them might have been a proper condescension to their weakness, it is to be remembered, that the emulation of eloquence so ready to prevail among them, might have rendered such an indulgence *dangerous.*

d *I for Apollos.*] Mr. Locke fancies, (comparing chap. iv. 6,) that by Apollos, Paul means that *Jewish teacher* who was set up in opposition to him, and came among them, after he had preached the *gospel* to them; but it seems much more probable to me, especially from the *text* just referred to, that he chose this name, that he might give no offence, and to shew that he should lament and condemn any division among them, though it were in favour of *himself,* or the *dearest friend* he had in the world. I cannot think St. Paul would have described the *false apostle,* if there were any one person who might be so called, as *watering his plantation,* which he rather wasted; or have spoken of himself, and that *messenger of Satan,* as *one;* as he does verse 8.

e *Are*

SECT. V

even because they are the *ministers* of Christ, *by whose means you have* been instructed in his religion, and under whose teachings ye have *believed* and embraced it; and because they have humbly attempted to do their part for this great purpose, *even as the Lord gave to every man* both furniture and success. *I have planted* a Christian church among you; *Apollos has* since *watered* it by his affecting and useful addresses, (Acts xviii. 27,) *but* it was *God* who *gave the increase*, and caused the plantation thus watered to grow: no labourer can make his seed spring up without the influence of heaven, sunshine, and rain. When you come *therefore* to compare our part with that of God, it appeareth even as nothing, in the comparison. We freely own, that how highly soever you may think of us, *he that planteth is nothing* at all, *and he that watereth; but God, who* by his efficacious Spirit and grace *giveth the increase*, is all in all.

1 Cor. III. 5.

6 7

But as for this opposition which you make between us, and this zeal with which you contend for one against another, it is altogether unreasonable and absurd: for *he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one*[e]; we are united in interest, *and* united in design and affection; so that instead of being pleased, we are rather displeased and grieved, with these invidious comparisons in favour of either. Our great concern is, to please our great Lord, to whom we are shortly to give up our account, and from whom *we shall receive, every one, his own* proper *reward according to his own labour*, and not according to the prejudices of our fellow-servants either for, or against us. *For we* are not lords and proprietors of the church, nor persons that have independent schemes of our own to carry on; but we *are the fellow-labourers of God*[f], the great Master of the family. *Ye are the husbandry of God*, which we are to cultivate, that

8 9

the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one: and every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

e *Are one.*] This is, (as Mr. *Cradock* well observes, in his *Apost. Hist.* p. 156,) another cogent argument against *divisions*; that, though their labours were different, and their rewards proportionable, yet they had in the general *one office*, and were employed as *workers together* by *God*, to plant the seeds of grace and holiness in the souls of men, and to bring them on to perfection. He here introduces an excellent discourse, of the happy consequences of *faithfulness* in the ministerial work, and the awful account of it to be given up to God. A subject familiar to his own mind; and so proper for their teachers, that if it render the *epistle* something less regular, it balances the account by rendering it so much more useful.

f *The fellow-labourers of God.*] This is the exact import of συνεργοι Θεου, which our version renders, *labourers together with God*; an improper rendering on every account.

that ye may bring forth fruit for him. [*Ye are*] *the building of God*, which we are to endeavour to advance; that he may dwell in you, as in his holy temple, and glorify his name among you. SECT. V. 1 Cor. III. 9.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO that wishes the welfare of the church of *Christ*, must not lament those sad remainders of *carnality* which are often to be found among them who have the greatest advantage for becoming *spiritual*; while the same contentious principles, fermented, no doubt, by the same malignant enemy of the whole body, breathe in so many of its members, and diffuse a kind of poison, which at once swells and torments it? What *envyings*, and *strife*, and *factions*, among those who ought to join as *brethren*, and to know but *one* interest! What a desire, in many instances, to increase the burdens of each other, instead of *bearing* them with friendly sympathy! Ver. 1 3

May *Christians* be cured of this dishonourable and fatal attachment to distinguished *parties*, and human names! May ministers feel more of that generous and noble spirit which this great *apostle* expresses! His reasoning hath the same force still. Ministers are still intended to be only the *instruments* of producing and establishing faith in their hearers, and still depend, as entirely as ever, upon the blessing of God *to give the increase* to their labours. To that may they daily look; and be sensible that they are nothing without it; and that with it, their part is so small that they hardly deserve to be mentioned. May their hands and hearts be more united; and retaining a due sense of the honour which God doth them, in employing them in his *vineyard*, and in *his building*, may they faithfully labour, not as for themselves, but for the great Proprietor, and till the day come, when he will remember them in full proportion to their fidelity and diligence. 4 5, 6, 7 9 8

SECT. VI.

As a useful lesson both to teachers and private Christians, in the present state of the Corinthian church, the Apostle reminds them of that great trial which every man's work was to undergo, the great guilt of defiling God's temple, the vanity of human wisdom in the sight of God, and the great happiness of the true believer in that universal grant which God had made him of every thing necessary to his welfare. 1 Cor. III. 10, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS III. 10.

1 Cor. III. 10.

SECT. VI.

I HAVE spoken of you as God's building; and in that view, have the pleasure to say, that
1 Cor. III. 10. in my first preaching amongst you, when you were entire strangers to the first principles of the gospel, *according to* the measure of *the grace of God given to me;* to which I desire to refer the honour of all that I am, and of all that I do, in this excellent work; *I* have been enabled to act *in the character of a skilful architect,* or master-builder: for with all due care and application, *have I laid the* great *foundation,* which hath strength sufficient to bear all the stress even of our eternal hopes. *And* one, and *another,* whom God calls to labour among you, *buildeth thereon,* for the further edification of your church, and of the souls of its particular members: *but let every one* carefully *see to it, how he buildeth thereon,* and what superstructure he raises.

11 This is all indeed that remains to be done: *for other* solid *foundation no one is able to lay, beside what is* already *laid, which is Jesus Christ*[a], the great foundation-stone, which God hath laid in Zion, elect and precious; and I take it for granted, no one who calls himself a Christian

12 will attempt to lay any other. *If any man build,* I say, *upon this foundation,* let him look to the materials and nature of his work; whether he raise a stately and magnificent temple upon it, adorned as it were, like the house of God at Jerusalem, with *gold* and *silver* [*and*] large, beautiful, and *costly stones;* [*or*] a mean hovel, consisting of nothing better than planks of *wood,* roughly put together, and thatched with *hay*

1 Cor. III. 10. ACCORDING to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble:

a *Which is Jesus Christ.*] L'Enfant would render it, *even this, that Jesus is the Christ;* but I think the sense given in our *text* much nobler.

b *The*

hay [*and*] *stubble*; that is, let him look to it, whether he teach the substantial vital truths which do indeed belong to Christianity, and which it was intended to support and illustrate; or set himself to propagate vain subtleties and conceits on the one hand, or legal rites and Jewish traditions on the other; which, though they do not absolutely destroy the foundation disgrace it as a mean edifice would do a grand and expensive foundation, laid with great pomp and solemnity. But to prevent this, let me seriously admonish you, that whatever any man's work may be, and however it may be covered, and as it were hid behind the scaffolding, *every one's work shall* ere long *be made manifest. For the* great *day*, which is approaching, *shall lay it open because it shall* then *be* as it were *discovered by fire; yea, the fire* of that great day of general conflagration, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, *shall prove every man's work, of what kind it is* [b]. It shall stand a severe examination, which will as soon expose the vanity of many things, which some admired preachers value themselves upon, and for which they are extolled by their hearers, as the flame of some mighty burning shews the difference between the stability of a straw roof and a marble wall. And then *if any man's superstructure abide* the test, and be approved he will not only have the comfort of it in his own mind, which is an immediate and permanent satisfaction; but *he shall* also *receive a* glorious *reward* from Christ, the great Head of the church, and Proprietor of the building, in comparison of which the applauses of men, or any thing they can bestow, deserve not to be mentioned by the name of a reward. *But if any man's work be* then *burnt* up; if on that trial it be found like the combustible and mean materials which I represented by the wood, the hay, and the stubble; the consequence is, that *he will sustain a* proportionable *loss* [c]. He will find he

1 Cor. III. 12.

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

13

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

14

15 If any man's work shall be burnt he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be

15

b *The day shall prove every man's work.* It is so very unnatural, with Dr. Whitby to interpret this of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of any approaching persecutions of the christian church, that one cannot but wonder, that *critics* of character should have adopted such a sense.

c *Sustain a* proportionable *loss.*] I cannot but fear, that an application to such *niceties* of unprofitable learning, as those in which some, who have the charge of souls, spend almost the whole of their time, to the neglect of the *vitals* of Christianity, will be found in this day, *lost labour.*

SECT. VI.

he has been spending his time and strength to little purpose, and has lost a great deal of that reward which he might through Divine grace, have secured, had he applied himself with vigour and zeal to the proper labours of a gospel-minister. *Yet*, if he be upon the whole a good man, who hath built upon Christ as the foundation, and, on the terms of the gospel, committed his soul to him, *he shall himself be saved*, and find mercy of the Lord; *though* in comparison with that more abundant entrance into his kingdom which others will have, it may be said, that he is saved with extreme difficulty, and *as* a man whose house is in flames while he is in it, and who is therefore forced with great terror to escape *through the fire*[d], sustaining the loss of every thing but his life.

be saved; yet so, as by fire.

1 Cor. III. 15.

16 Again, before I dismiss this topic of your being the building of God, let me lead you into some farther reflections, and ask you seriously, *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God*[e]? that the whole body of Christian converts is dedicated to his peculiar service, *and* honoured by his most gracious presence, as *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you* and you thereby appear to be

16 Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

bour. Though such as employ themselves chiefly to inculcate in their preaching, *doctrines, ceremonies*, or *forms of human invention*, come nearer to the case immediately referred to here. L'Enfant refers this *loss* to the reproach and shame which such shall suffer before the tribunal of Christ.

d *Through the fire.*] To be as *a brand plucked out of the burning*, is well known, as a proverbial expression to signify a narrow escape from extreme danger. Compare Zech. iii. 2: Amos iv. 11; and especially Isa. xxxiii. 11, 14, to which some have thought the *apostle* here alludes. Δια πυρος, (Jude 23,) is put for passing *through the fire, as* δια υδατος, (1 Pet. iii. 20,) signifies to be saved from the *water* by passing *through it*, as the ark did. The learned *Elsner*, who urges and illustrates these instances, shews that the most approved heathen writers use the phrase in this sense. (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 78.) Many divines have well shewn how far this *text* is from giving any support to a popish *purgatory*. And though Mr. *Fleming* follows many of the ancient *fathers*, in explaining it of some terror, or pain, which christians of very *imperfect* character may be exposed to, when they rise, (as he supposes they will,) amidst the flames of the last conflagration (*Flem. First Resur.* p. 44.) the *text* will admit so fair a sense on the interpretation here given, that I cannot persuade myself from hence, without farther evidence, that numbers of holy souls, who have long been glorified in heaven, will be re-united to their bodies, which are to be raised in glory, to be in the first moments of that union *terrified* and *tormented*; though it should be but for ever so short a time. That the Pagans, as well as some of the *fathers*, had a notion of some such *purgatory*, Elsner has shewn in the passage cited above.

e *You are the temple of God.*] Elsner hath many fine passages here, from Philo, Plato, and other writers, in which they represent a virtuous mind as the *temple of God*, and in which heathens speak in the highest and strongest terms, of the obligations men are under to keep his temples *inviolate* and *unpolluted*. And if, as Mr. Locke supposes, Paul's chief opposer was a Jew, the vast veneration he would of course have for the temple of Jerusalem, would add great weight to this argument with respect to him and his followers.

17 If any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

be consecrated to himself? Now *if any one* defile, or *destroy the temple of God*, it may well be apprehended, that *God*, ever jealous of his own honour, *will destroy him* And you may assure yourselves from this view, that whatever preaching, or whatever conduct, tends to diminish its purity and glory, will be very severely resented by him; even much more than the violation of the place, great as that impiety and provocation was, where he so long caused his name to dwell upon mount Zion. *For the temple of God*, considered as such, *is* undoubtedly *holy*, and awful. Much more then must that be so, which he hath erected by his grace in the breasts of intelligent creatures, and sanctified to himself, as the everlasting residence of his peculiar complacency. Compare Isa. lvii. 15; chap. lxvi. 1, 2. *Now ye are this* [*temple;*] each of you, if a true Christian, is such a sacred shrine, and the whole Christian church the complete and magnificent building. It therefore becomes every member of it, to be very careful how he behaves, and what he teaches among you; lest he should commit an evil, of the enormity of which he may not be immediately aware.

SECT. VI.

1 Cor. III. 17.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

18 I know there are those among you whose pride and self-conceit may lead them to despise this admonition, especially as coming from me; but *let no man deceive himself* with vain speculations of his own worth and abilities. *If any one of you seem to be wise in this world*, if he value himself upon what is commonly called wisdom among Jews or Gentiles, *let him become a fool, that he may be wise* indeed. Let him humbly acknowledge his own natural ignorance and folly, and embrace that gospel which the wisdom of the world proudly and vainly derides as foolishness, if he desire to approve himself really and substantially wise, and to reap at last the honours and rewards of those who are truly so in the sight of God.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

19 *For* all *the* boasted *wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*, who with one glance sees through all its vanity; *as it is written*, Job v. 13. *He entangleth the wise in their own* crafty *artifice*, often ruining them by those designs which they had formed with the utmost efforts of human policy, and were most intent upon executing.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

20 *And again* it is said elsewhere; Ps. xciv. 11. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*

SECT. VI.

vain. He sees, how they ensnare themselves in their own subtleties, and when they think themselves most sagacious, are only amused with their own sophistry and deceit.

1 Cor. III. 20.

21 *Therefore*, upon the whole, that I may return to the point from whence I set out, considering all I have said, and especially considering in what view the great God regards these things which we are so ready to value ourselves upon; *let none glory in men*, or divide themselves into parties, out of attachment to this or that teacher. *For all things are yours*, and we in particular, are to be regarded, not as your lords and commanders, that you should list under our banners; but rather as your servants. I except not myself, or the most honoured among my brethren; *whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas*, be in question, we are all equally yours; to serve you to the utmost of our abilities, in the advancement of your best interests. Yea, I may go farther, and say, *whether* we speak of *the world*, God will give you so much of it as shall be for your real good; and indeed he supports its whole frame in a great measure for your sakes; *or* if we survey *life* in all its various conditions, *or death*, and all its solemn harbingers and attendants, God will make the one, *or* the other in different views advantageous to you, and will adjust the circumstances of both with the kindest regard to your happiness. *Things present, or future*, the comforts and privileges of this life on the one hand, or its afflictions and troubles on the other, and at length, the boundless felicity of the eternal state, where affliction and trouble shall be no more known; *all are*, through the Divine grace, *yours*. Remember this, and let the thought raise your minds above these little things which now occasion such contention between you; and be united in love, as God hath united you in privileges and hopes. *And* bear in mind too as the counterpart of this happy detail, that *ye are Christ's*; his property, his subjects his people; and let that engage you to attend to his royal law of charity[f]. by which you may be peculiarly

21 Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours.

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come: all are yours:

23 And ye *are* Christ's.

[f] Royal law of charity.] Nothing could have a greater efficacy to put an end to the contentions, so prevalent among the Christians at Corinth, than the consideration of those *high* privileges and hopes which were *common* to them all, as it would tend to sweeten their spirits, and inspire them with honourable and affectionate sentiments with respect to their brethren.

Christ's; and Christ is God's.

peculiarly known to be his. *And* as *Christ* [*is*] *God's* and refers all his services as a Mediator, to his Father's glory, it will most effectually promote that great end of his appearance, that you should learn such a subjection of soul to him, and imbibe those candid and generous sentiments which I am labouring to produce and cherish in your minds.

SECT. VI.

1 Cor. III. 23.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what delight may the *Christian* survey this grand inventory, and, conscious that he is Christ's, call *all things his own!* With what pleasure survey the various gifts and graces of *ministers*, and consider them as given by God for his edification! With what complacency look round on *things present*, and forward on *things to come*, in this connection, and call *the world* his own; and count not only *life*, but *death*, amongst his treasures! Both in their different aspects, are subservient to the happy purpose of glorifying God: and surely, when by death we may do it more effectually, death should be more welcome than life. And welcome it must indeed be to every believer, as the appointed means of transmitting him to the sight and enjoyment of God, and the possession of better blessings, than *Paul*, or *Apollos*, could ever describe, or any *thing present*, or *any thing to come* in this world, could ever afford. Ver. 21-23

Let these sublime views elevate the *Christian* above those occasions of contention, which, for want of ascending to such noble contemplations, are often the source of innumerable evils. And let us add to them that other consideration, that *we are the temples of the Holy Ghost*; if *Christians* indeed, we are inhabited by God, *even by his Spirit.* Let this engage us to take the strictest care, neither to *defile* ourselves, nor to injure our brethren; lest, in either view, it should be resented and punished by the holy God, as a sacrilegious profanation. 16,17

Let us not overvalue the *wisdom of this world*, since it is little regarded by God; nor be greatly concerned, if fools account our wisdom, folly, and our life, madness. *So* censured they the *prophets*, and *apostles*, before us: nor did our Master himself escape the calumny and outrage. We shall be happy enough, if we approve our fidelity to him, and if we build a wise *superstructure* on *Christ, as the* great, the *only Foundation.* 19

Let his *ministers* especially, be solicitous, that they may not lose the labour of their lives, by choosing unhappily to employ them, in that which will turn to no account, in the great day 10

SECT. VI.

of his appearing. Let them carefully examine their materials. Surely if they have senses spiritually exercised, it cannot be hard to distinguish between the substantial and undoubted doctrines of *Christianity*, which are as *gold, and silver, and precious stones*, and those fictitious, or at best, dubious and intricate points, which in comparison with the former, are *but wood, and hay, and stubble.* And if in urging these, they passionately inveigh against their brethren, and endeavour to bring them into contempt, or suspicion, what do they but cement these combustible materials with sulphur.

Ver. 12-15

13 O! let the frequent views of that last searching fire, that *grand period of all*, be much in our thoughts: that day, when not only the works of ministers, but every private person, must, as it were, pass through the flames. May we then be *saved*, not with difficulty, but with praise and honour! May our works, of what kind soever they are, abide, so as to be found worthy of applause, and through Divine grace receive a distinguished reward.

SECT. VII.

To lay in a farther remedy against the pride and faction so ready to prevail among the Corinthians, the apostle leads them into several useful reflections on the nature of the ministerial office, the final judgment of him who searcheth all hearts, and the obligations they were under to the Divine goodnsss, for every advantage by which they were distinguished from others. 1 Cor. IV. 1—7.

SECT. VII.

1 Cor. IV. 1.

1 CORINTHIANS IV. 1

1 Cor. IV. 1. LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

I HAVE told you, how rich and happy you are in the Divine donation, in consequence of which all things are yours; and particularly, Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, with their various gifts and endowments. Learn therefore to form your estimate of us aright; and *let a man so account of us*, not as the masters of the church, but *as the servants of Christ*, who are in obedience to his commands, to wait on his family; esteeming it honour *and* happiness enough, if we approve ourselves as *stewards of the mysteries of God;* as persons whose business it is, with the sincerest regard to his glory, to dispense that gospel which contains such sublime truths for so many ages concealed from the

2 Moreover, it is required in stewards, that

2 knowledge of the world. And *as for what remains* to be done, in the discharge of this office, I hope we shall alway remember, that *it is demanded*

that a man be found faithful.

demanded in stewards, that a man be found faithful; since they also, as well as lower servants in the family, are subject to account. And accordingly it is my highest ambition, that my great Master may judge me faithful, whether my fellow-servants be pleased, or displeased, with my conduct. And if my fidelity to my Lord may offend them, which is a very supposable case, I am well contented to abide all its consequences. *For* I will freely declare in this view, *it is with me the smallest thing that can be* imagined, *that I should be judged by you*, dear as you are to me, *or by any man's judgment*; his day will soon be over; his censures can effect so little, that amidst the great prospects I have before me, it seems scarce to deserve a mention. *Nor* indeed *do I* so *judge myself*, as if my case were finally to be determined by my own apprehensions concerning it. *For* though I bless God, *I am not conscious to myself of any thing* criminal, of any designed neglect of my office, or unfaithfulness in my trust, *yet I am not hereby justified*[a]: that is not the main thing in question; I know partiality to ourselves may often lead us to overlook many faults, for which God may another day condemn us. *But he that judgeth me*, the Person by whose judgment I am to stand, or fall, *is the Lord* Jesus Christ, who searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the children of men. *Therefore* be strictly careful that ye *judge nothing before the* appointed *time*, that is, *until* he, *the* great *Lord* of all, *shall come, who shall* pluck off the mask of every artful hypocrite, how high soever he may bear himself in the Christian church; shall *bring to light the hidden things of darkness*[b], *and shall manifest* all *the* secret *counsels of the hearts*[c]. *And then shall every*

SECT. vii.

1 Cor. IV. 2.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. 3

4 For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 4

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every 5

a *Yet am I not hereby justified.*] This seems a gentle, but a very affecting insinuation, that his *opponents*, confident as they might seem in their own integrity and safety, would do well to take *greater* heed, that they were not imposed upon by the deceitfulness of their own hearts.

b *Bring to light the hidden things of darkness.*] This is a lively and just insinuation, that under specious forms, his *enemies* concealed very dark designs, which would not bear the discoveries of that awful day.

c *Manifest all the* secret *counsels of the heart.*] This passage also suggests a very solid argument against *magnifying one minister above another*, namely, that the secret principles of men's actions are unknown; and it is enlarged upon to very good practical purposes; while the *apostle*, at the same time, takes an opportunity of making a very solemn profession of *his own* faithfulness, and shewing the boldness he had towards God, and his modesty and candour to men; all which were extremely suitable to the general purposes he had in view.

SECT. vii.

every one have in the most public manner, that *praise from God*, before the assembled world, which is proportionable to his real character and conduct.

every man have praise of God.

1 Cor. IV. 5.

6 *These things, brethren, I have by a* very obvious *figure transferred to myself, and* [*to*] *Apollos*[d]; mentioning our names, and that of Cephas only, instead of many more, since you know the entire friendship there is among us, and how far the names of most about whom you contend, are inferior to these. And I have done this, not on our own account, as you may easily apprehend, but *for your sakes, that you may learn, in* attending to what has been said concerning *us*, distinguished as we are by our office, furniture, and success, *not to entertain too high an opinion of yourselves*, or others, whom you are most ready to admire, *above what is here written*[e], and appears reasonable on the principles which have been laid down: *that you may not be puffed up for one* teacher, and *against another*; which surely you cannot allow with respect to other teachers, when you see us renouncing all such attachment to our-

6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself, and *to* Apollos, for your sakes: that ye might learn in us not to think *of men*, above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

7 selves. And indeed this would be very unreasonable, if the distinctions were as great, as you, or they, who have the highest conceit of themselves, can imagine. *For* allowing all, that self-love and prepossession can wish, let me ask the man who carries it to the greatest height, *Who maketh thee to differ* [*from another*,] in any furniture, or attainment, whether intellectual, or moral[f]? *And what hast thou* of any kind *which*

7 For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?

d *Transferred to myself*, &c.] Some, and particularly Mr. Locke, have inferred from hence, that not St. Paul, and Apollos, but some other persons, were set up among the Corinthians for heads of parties, for whose names the *apostle* substituted his own, and that of his most intimate friend; but the learned and judicious *Wasius* well observes, (*Meletem.* p. 104.) that it is probable their names were used among some others omitted, and the figure was only this, that the names of St. Paul and Apollos were used to signify themselves, and any others so extolled; and when the apostle would say, how little ministers were in themselves, he chose, out of humility and prudence, rather to take such freedom with himself and his most particular and intimate friend, than with others.

e *What is here written.*] *Elsner.* (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 85.) confirms this interpretation, and produces many instances, in which ὑπερ is used to express, *having too high an opinion of one's self.* L'Enfant explains it in something of a different sense, "*above what scripture warrants.*"

f Whether intellectual, or moral.] I include *moral* attainments, because the *apostle* had, in the preceding *verses*, been speaking of *fidelity* in the ministry, and he elsewhere in this *epistle* speaks of *obtaining mercy to be faithful*, (chap. vii. 25,) and would be understood, as referring, not only to his giving us our faculties, but exciting us to the right use of them, both by external calls and advantages, and by inward impressions of his grace on the heart; though still in a manner suited to our free and rational natures, and which

receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received *it?*

which thou didst not receive from God, the great Parent of universal good? *But if thou hast received* [*it*] all from him, *why dost thou boast* in the gift of his liberal goodness, *as if thou hadst not received* [*it*] from him: but it were originally and essentially thine own? Would you all but seriously reflect upon this, it would teach you humbler sentiments, much more rational in themselves, and on the whole, much more for your credit, as well as comfort. SECT. vii. 1 Cor. IV. 7.

IMPROVEMENT.

NOTHING can be more conducive to the advantage of *Christianity*, and by consequence, of the world, whose happiness is so much concerned in its support and success, than that its preachers should consider, and their hearers remember, the nature of their office. They are not *lords over God's household* and *heritage*, but *ministers of Christ*, whose business it is to promote their Master's honour; *stewards of his mysteries*, who are to endeavour both to keep and to dispense them with all good fidelity. From their Master therefore may they take all their instructions, and to him let them refer all their administrations. Various judgments will be passed upon them; and they, who will oppose the attempts of some of their brethren to introduce corruption and confusion into his family, will have many an unkind reflection thrown upon them, and experience the severity of censure, for a conduct which merits the justest approbation. But let them learn by this excellent *apostle*, to be above *the judgment of men*, and to keep the *judgment of the Lord* in view; that they may not only be supported under that petulance of their fellow-servants, but may learn to guard against, what is much more dangerous, the treachery of their own hearts, and the flattery of self-love; lest they fondly mistake the voice of prejudice for that of conscience, or in other words, the voice of an erroneous conscience, for that of a conscience well informed. Ver. 1 2 3

Let us often recollect the narrow limits of our own knowledge, that we may learn modesty in our censures of each other. He only can judge, *who knoweth the heart;* and there is a day approaching, which will *manifest all its secrets.* While others, 4 5, &c. with

which, however some may be distinguished by them, leaves all who chuse wrong, without excuse, and admits the exercise of justice, as well as grace, in the final distributions of good and evil. See *the paraphrase on* chap. iii. 7, which seems very applicable to this *clause.* Yet as it is certain, the Corinthians chiefly gloried in their gifts, and in those of their favourite teachers, I doubt not but it is to *these* that the *apostle* chiefly refers in this place, and cannot think that the stress of the controversy relating to this sanctifying influence of Divine grace, does by any means rest on *this* passage.

a *You*

SECT. VII.

with a pitiable mixture of arrogance, and ignorance, *judge one another*, and *judge us*, let us rather be concerned that we may secure that *praise of God*, which will be heard and felt by the soul, with the highest rapture, and will silence every echo of human applause, or censure.

Ver. 7 To conclude: if it hath pleased God, in any respect, to *distinguish* us from others, by the *gifts* or *graces* which he hath bestowed upon us, let us humbly trace these distinctions to their true source: and instead of indulging the least degree of pride on their account, let us rather be the more humble. For surely the more we receive from God, the more we are indebted and obliged; and the more we are obliged to the Divine goodness, the greater ought our shame and confusion to be, that we have not answered those obligations by more faithful care, and more constant gratitude.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle, in order to gain farther upon their affections, represents the many hardships and dangers, to which he and his brethren were exposed, in comparison of that easy state in which the Corinthians were, and reminding them at the same time of their particular obligations to him, he warns them not to force him on severities, to the use of which he was very averse. 1 Cor. IV. 8, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS IV. 8.

SECT. VIII.

1 Cor. IV. 8.

I HAVE suggested some humbling thoughts to your consideration; but I fear you will have little relish for them, as you seem to indulge yourselves in very different views. Am I not rather to congratulate Christians, whose rank and figure in the world is so much superior to that of many of their brethren, and even of their first apostle too? For *now you are full*; *now you are rich*; you enjoy so great a degree of prosperity and plenty, that methinks *you have* even *reigned as kings without us*[a]: so happy in a variety

1 COR. IV. 8.

NOW ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign,

a *You have reigned as kings*, &c.] This is a proverbial expression of the most splendid and plentiful circumstances; and some think, when the *apostle* adds, *I wish ye did reign*, he means, "I wish you had the authority of princes, that ye might shelter and accomodate us amidst all our distresses and afflictions." But one can hardly drink he did indeed wish each of them *a prince*, or the civil power in their hands. It seems much more probable, that as spiritual objects were so familiar to his mind, he changes the idea in the manner the *paraphrase* expresses; in which sense it seems that Christians are called *priests and kings*, (Rev. i. 6:) as it is certain they are called a *royal priesthood*. (1 Pet. ii. 9.)—I cannot think with Mr. L'Enfant, that this refers peculiarly to the factious *pastors* of the church of Corinth.

b *Last*

reign, that we also might reign with you.

riety of secular enjoyments, that you have hardly missed my company. *And* indeed *I wish you did reign*, in the truest and noblest sense, and were altogether as happy as you think yourselves. I wish the most excellent powers of the human nature had, through Divine grace, greater rule and sovereignty in your souls, *that we*, in the midst of all our present distress, *might also reign with you*, and partake of your happiness, in that high degree, in which, if it were sincere and solid, our affection for you would enable us to share it. And surely we sufficiently need such consolation as this: *for I think God hath exhibited us, the apostles* of his Son, like those gladiators which are brought out on the stage *last* of all, *as appointed to* certain *death*[b], and therefore not furnished with weapons of defence, nor allowed so much as a chance of escaping: *for we are* produced, as it were, on a public theatre, and *made a spectacle to the* whole *world* of rational creatures, both *to angels and men*[c], who are all held in solicitous attention to so strange and tragical a sight. Imagine not, that I have aggravated the representation; the more you attend to our circumstances, the more you will discern its justice; for *we* [*are*] treated like *fools*, babblers, and madmen, *for the sake of Christ*, (Acts xvii. 18. chap. xxvi. 24, as if we were the weakest and most ignorant of mankind, because we preach the plain truths of the gospel, and endeavour to the utmost to exalt our Lord. *But ye* [*are*] *wise in Christ:* ye set up for a kind of Christian philosophers, of more refined

SECT. viii.

1 Cor. IV. 8.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

9

10 We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ: we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable

10

b *Last of all.*] I cannot think, as Elsner seems to do, that the word ἔσχατοι, refers to the *low rank* which the *apostles* held in secular life; or with Messieurs Calvin, Locke, and L'Enfant, that St. Paul speaks of himself as the *last called apostle*; but that there is a reference to the Roman custom of bringing forth those persons on the *theatre* in the after part of the day, either to fight with each other, or with wild beasts, who were appointed to *certain* death, and had not that poor chance of escaping which those brought forth in the morning had. Compare *Sen. Epist. Cap.* vii. *Reeves Apol.* Vol. I. p. 237. Such kind of spectacles were so common in all the provinces, that it is no wonder we should find such an allusion here. The word ἀποδειξεν, *exhibited*, and θεατρον, *a spectacle on the theatre*, have in this connection a beautiful propriety. The whole passage is indeed full of high eloquence, and finely adapted to move their compassion in favour of those who were so generously exposing and sacrificing themselves for the public good.

c *A spectacle—to angels and men.*] This representation is wonderfully pathetic and sublime; while they considered evil angels and men as beholding them with all the malignant, and good angels and men with all the benevolent passions, it must have a great tendency to inspire their minds with the most heroic sentiments.—Elsner has given an excellent collection of passages from heathen writers, in which such a figure is made use of by them.

SECT viii.

ed understandings than your brethren, and think you have found out a political way at once of securing the blessings of the gospel, and escaping its inconveniencies and persecutions. *We* [*are*] *weak*, in presence, in infirmities, and in sufferings: *but ye* [*are*] *strong*, have great confidence in yourselves, and are got above many of those tender alarms and impressions which hearts like ours are subject to, on a variety of occasions; *you* [*are*] *honourable*, adorned with extraordinary gifts, in which you are ready to glory, and many of you set off with circumstances of external distinction; *but we* [*are*] poor, *despised* creatures, treated with contempt wherever we come. For *even to this present hour*, after all the battles fought, and all the conquests already gained, by the gospel, we are often exposed to circumstances of the extremest want and misery. Sometimes *we both hunger and thirst*, and amidst our charitable journies to diffuse the gospel, hardly find entertainment of the plainest kind, to relieve our necessities, or money to purchase it. *And* our clothes are so worn out with travelling, and we are so ill furnished for buying more, that we *are* often almost *naked*[d], not having decent raiment to wear, though we appear so often in public assemblies. *And* in many instances, where our benevolent and important message is heard, instead of being received with due respect, we *are* insulted, and perhaps *buffeted*, by the unruly and barbarous mob; *and* at best, if we now and then meet with a little more hospitable usage, it is but for a very little while; for, whereas you dwell in a rich and magnificent city, we *have no certain abode*, but are continually removing from one place to another.

1 Cor. IV. 10.

rable, but we *are* despised.

11 Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;

12 *And* though we are engaged in a work of so great importance to the souls of men, which might well engross all our time and care; yet such are the circumstances in which we are often placed, that we are obliged in duty and prudence, to *labour* in some secular calling, *working with our own hands*, to procure the necessary supports

12 And labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we

d *Are naked*, &c.] Surely one cannot imagine any more glorious triumph of the truth, than what it gained in these circumstances, when St. Paul, with an impediment in his speech, and a personage rather contemptible, than graceful, appeared in a mean, and perhaps sometimes tattered dress, before persons of the highest rank, and yet commanded such attention, and made such impressions.

e *Faith*

we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it;

supports of the most frugal and parsimonious life. *But* in the most insolent and provoking manner *reviled* to our faces, and loaded with every opprobrious name of contempt, *we* meekly *bless* and pray for our enemies; *being persecuted, we endure it* patiently, unable to right and help ourselves. *Being blasphemed,* and spoken of in the most scandalous, and considering our sacred character, the most impious terms; *we* only *intreat* that men would more impartially examine our pretensions, that they may entertain more favourable sentiments concerning us; and in the mean time, we freely forgive them their rash and injurious censures. And on the whole, such is the usage we meet with that *we are made* and treated *like the* very *filth of the world*[e], like the wretches, which being taken from the dregs of the people, are offered as expiatory sacrifices to the infernal deities among the Gentiles, and loaded with curses, affronts and injuries, in the way to the altars, at which they are to bleed: [*or like*] *the refuse of all things to this day,* the very sweepings of the streets and stalls, a nuisance to all around us, and fit for nothing but to be trampled upon by the meanest and vilest of mankind.

SECT. viii.

1 Cor. IV. 12.

13 Being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the off-scouring of all things unto this day.

13

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you.*

I do not write these words to shame you, or in any degree to stain your credit with other churches, by such a representation, as if you were unmindful of my sufferings for the gospel; *but* considering the relation in which we stand to each other, and looking upon you *as my beloved sons, I warn* [*you*] of those dangers to which I fear you may be exposed, and of the regard which it is your duty and interest to pay to those who voluntarily subject themselves to

14

e *Filth of the world.*] The word καθαρμάτα has a force and meaning here which no one word in our language can express; I have given, what I am persuaded is the true meaning of it in the paraphrase, and must refer to Dr. *Hen. More, (Theol. Works,* p. 63,) and Dr. *Whitby in loc.* for the illustration of this bold and noble figure. Suidas says that these wretched *victims* were called καθαρμάτα, as their death was esteemed an *expiation;* and he tells us the word περιψήματα, which we render *off-scouring,* was also applied to them; and *Bos, (Exercit.* p. 125,) illustrates this sense of the word by a very large and judicious collection of *Greek quotations.* See also Dr. *Kidley's Christian Passover,* p. 92. It appears from some of these passages, that when the ashes of these unhappy men were thrown into the sea, these very words were used in the ceremony, γένου περίψημα, γένου καθαρμα; but the former of these titles was given them, in reference to that *original* signification of the words, which the *paraphrase* on the end of the *verse* expresses. That so wise and ancient a republic as that of Marseilles, originally a Greek colony, should have retained this savage usage, is astonishing; yet *Servius* expressly asserts it. *Serv. in Æneid. Lib.* III. *Lin.* 75.

SECT. VIII.

to so many evils on your account, that you ought surely to be the last to increase their burdens. And I may particularly urge this with respect to myself; *for if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ*, be they ever so many, or ever so valuable, *yet* [*you have*] *not many* spiritual *fathers, for in Christ Jesus I* Paul *have begotten you by the gospel:* I preached it first among you, and was the happy means of your spiritual birth, and all the privileges of God's children which you receive by it. *I beseech you therefore* [*that*] with filial piety and duty *ye be* all *imitators of me*, keeping strictly to the faith which I taught you, and carefully copying my meekness and humility.

1 Cor. IV. 15.

15 For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 *For this reason*, that you may be the better able to trace my steps, and may be animated to do it with the greater care, *I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved son*, or dear convert, (Acts xix. 22,) *and* who, though yet but a young man, is remarkably *faithful in the Lord*, an excellent Christian, *who will* be able more perfectly to *bring to your remembrance my ways in Christ, as I am every where teaching in every church* where I come; by which you will perceive, that I do not act partially with respect to you, but proceed on general principles of integrity and prudence, from which I no where allow myself to vary.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

18 *Some*, I hear, *are puffed up* in vain and proud confidence, *as if*, after all I have said, *I would not come to you*, and did not dare to appear in a place where I have now so many opposers.

18 Now some are puffed up as though I would not come to you.

19 *But* they are extremely mistaken, for *I will* certainly *come to you*, and that *quickly* too, *if the Lord*, who holds the reins of universal government in his hands, *permit: and* I *will* then *know* and examine, *not the* confident *speech*, and florid talk *of those that are* thus *puffed up, but the power* they have to vindicate their pretensions, and what miraculous proof they can give of that authority in the church which they presume to oppose to mine. *For the kingdom of God is not in speech*, in confident assertions, or in elegant forms of address, *but* is established *in* the exertions of a miraculous *power*, conferred on the true and genuine apostles of our Lord by the effusion of his Spirit upon them, by virtue of which, his faithful subjects may be fully satisfied, they act according to his will, in paying them

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

them the regard they require. *What* therefore *do you* on the whole desire, and *choose? That I should come to you*, as it were, *with a rod*[f] of correction in my hand, using my apostolic power for your chastisement; *or*, which for your sakes I should much rather choose, *in love, and* in *the spirit of meekness* and gentleness, comforting and commending, instead of chastising? You will, I hope, think seriously upon the matter in time, before things are driven to such an extremity, as may not any longer leave it in my choice or yours.

SECT. VIII.

1 Cor. IV. 21.

IMPROVEMENT.

How adorable is the efficacy of Divine grace which bore those zealous and faithful servants of *Christ* through all their labours and fatigues, when they were made *a spectacle to the world, to angels and men!* How glorious a spectacle! worthy surely, as any thing, since that wonderful scene on *Calvary*, of the eye of God himself. Ver 9

How little are we to judge of the Divine favour by external circumstances, when those best of men were *of all* others the *most miserable*, farther, than as their heavenly hope supported and animated them? And when that is taken into the account, who would not emulate their lot, though *hungry and thirsty*, though *naked and destitute, without habitation*, without protector, without friends? When we consider their share in the Divine friendship, when we consider the blessed effects of their labours, and the glorious crown which awaits them after all their sufferings; surely they must appear happy in proportion to the degree in which they seemed miserable, and glorious in proportion to the degree in which the world held them as infamous! 11—13

That illustrious person, whose *epistles* are now before us, knew not the pleasures of domestic life, in many of its most endearing relations.

f *With a rod* of correction.] That the *apostles* had often a miraculous power of inflicting death, and other temporal judgments, in case of aggravated offence, appears from other passages of *scripture*. Acts 5—10, chap. xiii. 10, 11; 1 Tim. i. 20; and is referred to more than once or twice, in these *epistles* to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 23, chap. x. 6, 8, chap. xiii. 2, 3, 10. And I cannot mention these passages, without leading my reader to reflect on the wisdom of Providence, in permitting such opposition to arise against St. Paul, particularly at Corinth. It gave him an opportunity of making the strongest *appeals* to what they are supposed to know of his *miraculous power*; and had these *appeals* not been indeed founded on the most certain and evident truth, they must, instead of restoring him to their regards, as we find in fact they did, have been sufficient of themselves utterly to have ruined all his reputation and interest among them, had it before been ever so great.

SECT. VIII.

relations. But God made him a *spiritual father* to multitudes; and no doubt, as the urges the consideration on his *children in Christ*, he felt the joy arising from it strong in his own soul, when
Ver. 15 he said, I *have begotten you in Christ Jesus by the gospel.* Surely it ought never to have been forgotten by them; and if through the artifices of ill-designing men, and the remaining infirmities of their own character, it was sometimes, and in some degree forgotten now, yet undoubtedly, it would be remembered by them
14 in the heavenly world for ever; even by as many as *the Lord his God had graciously given him.* And if there be any remembrance there, that they once grieved him, it will be an engagement to all those *offices* of an eternal friendship, which the exaltation of the heavenly state shall allow. In the mean time, his paternal affection for them wrought, not in a foolish fondness of indulgence, which in the language of Divine wisdom, is *hating a son;* but in the *character* of a prudent and faithful parent, who, desirous that
21 his children may be as wise and good as possible, will rather use the *rod* than suffer them to be undone. Yet when he speaks of using it, he speaks with regret, as one who would rather chuse to act in the *spirit of gentleness*, and without any mixture of severity, how necessary soever. The whole of his subsequent conduct to the *Corinthians*, as far as it may be learned from this, or the following *epistle*, bears a perfect consistency with these expressions, and illustrates their sincerity.

May God give to his *ministers* more of this *truly apostolical spirit*, more of those overflowings of holy love, attempering and attempered by that ardent zeal against sin, and that firm resolution in the discharge of duty, which shone so brightly in the *apostle* and in which he so freely and justly recommends himself *to the imitation of* his children and his brethren.

SECT. IX.

The Apostle proceeds to mention the irregularities which prevailed in the Corinthian church; and here handleth the case of the incestuous person, whom he commands them to separate from their communion. 1 Cor. V. 1, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS V. 1.

SECT. IX.

I HAVE spoken of coming to you with a rod of correction; and it is too probable I may be laid under a necessity of using it, though it be an unwilling necessity. For *it is generally reported*[a], [*that there is*] a kind of *lewdness among*

1 Cor. V. 1.

1 COR. V. 1.

IT is reported commonly, *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication, as

[a] *Generally reported.*] Dr. Whitby thinks, that the scandalous stories that were generally told among the *heathen*, of the incestuous practices of *primitive Christians*, had

SECT. ix.

1 Cor. V. 1.

as is not so much as named amongst the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

among you, and that too *such* scandalous and enormous *lewdness as is not heard of* even *among the heathen*, degenerate as they are, and abandoned as their practices are known to be, even *that a certain person should have* used criminal converse with *his father's wife* [b]. One would have imagined that a scandal like this, should have thrown the whole society into distress and humiliation, like the public mourning of a Jewish synagogue on the apostacy or ejection of one of its members; *and* yet it is said, that *ye are puffed up* with this spirit of pride and carnality which I have been mentioning *and* reproving. *Should ye not rather have lamented* on this sad occasion? and pursued those strenuous measures for reformation which the genius of the gospel so evidently dictates, *that he who hath committed this fact should be taken away from you*, and be no longer allowed to continue in your communion? *But* however negligent you have been, and whatever consequence I draw upon myself, by interposing in this affair, I cannot, I will not be silent. *I* am *absent indeed in body*, and therefore cannot take those vigorous steps which my zeal for the honour of Christ, and my tender concern for your reputation and happiness dictate: *but* I am *present in spirit* [c], *I have* a distinct view of all the circumstances of the case, and therefore in as determinate a manner, *as if I were* actually *present*, I have *judged* and passed sentence on *him who* I know *has* indeed *committed this enormity*. And the sentence I have passed is this: *That ye being* all solemnly *gathered together* in full assembly, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and my spirit* being present with you, *with the* efficacious *power of our Lord Jesus Christ*, acting according to my determination, though I be at such

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you.

2

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present *concerning* him that hath so done this deed;

3

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

4

had their *original* from the misrepresentation of this fact. Many quotations, brought by this learned author, and others, on this *text*, shew, that incest was held in high abomination among the *heathen*; and an enormity of this kind is, as is well known, called by *Cicero, Scelus incredibile & inauditum, an incredible and unheard of wickedness*. See also *Grot. de Jure Bel. & Pac. Lib.* II. *Cap.* v. § 14, No. 2.

b Criminal converse.] Probably some *father* had parted with his *wife*, perhaps provoked by her indiscretion, and his son, to whom she was *mother-in-law*, had married her; for by 2 Cor. vii. 12. it seems probable, the person injured was yet alive.

c *Present in spirit.*] Some think this refers to an extraordinary gift which St. Paul had of discerning clearly and circumstantially what was done at a distance. Compare Col. ii. 5; 2 Kings v. 26, chap. vi. 12. See Dr. *Benson's Hist.* Vol. II. p. 16.

d *To*

SECT. IX.

such a distance, and being ready to add an awful efficacy and sanction to your censure. *Do,* by a public and express act, *deliver such an one* by name *to Satan* [d], to be by him, as the terrible executioner of the Divine justice and displeasure, chastised and tormented, *in order to the destruction of the flesh, that,* for this shameful indulgence of its lascivious appetites and desires, it may be emaciated and enfeebled, and the offender, alarmed by sufferings of so extraordinary and formidable a nature, if possible, may be brought to true repentance and humiliation, that so *the* immortal *spirit may be saved, in the day of the Lord Jesus,* from those infinitely more insupportable and everlasting agonies to which it might otherwise be doomed.

1 Cor. V. 5. 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 And give me leave on this occasion farther to tell you, that *your boasting,* whether of such a person as your friend, if he be remarkable for any peculiar distinction in gifts, abilities and circumstances, or against him, as your enemy, if he be of an opposite faction, [*is*] *not* by any means *good* [e]. *Do you not know,* in a familiar instance, which it may be profitable for you to recollect, *that a little leaven* quickly diffuses itself by a secret fermentation, till it *leaveneth the whole mass.* Thus will evil examples tend to spread in the church; and if a brand of infamy be not quickly set upon the incorrigible offender, wickedness will grow familiar, and lose its horror; so that many other members of your society may be polluted, ensnared and dishonoured. 7 Set yourselves *therefore* with a resolution and diligence, like that which the Jews shew in all their dwellings, when the annual feast of the passover is approaching, to *purge out the leaven:* search for it, as it were, with lighted candles, wherever you suspect any of it to lurk unobserved, *that ye may* indeed *be* entirely

6 Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ

d *To deliver such an one to Satan,* &c.] Some think that, as Satan is considered as the head of all who are not under Christ as their head, that is, in the church of Christ, every one, who was cut off from the church, must of course be delivered over to Satan; but it seems much more reasonable to believe, that this refers to the infliction of some *bodily pains* or *diseases,* in which Satan might act as the instrument of the Divine justice. Compare 1 Tim. i. 20. and this was *for the destruction of the flesh,* not directly of the *fleshly* principle, for in that sense it could not be opposed to the *saving the spirit in the day of the Lord;* but probably, as the *paraphrase* intimates; for the emaciating and enfeebling the powers of animal nature.

e *Your boasting is not good.*] L'Enfant would read it interrogatively, *Have you not a fine subject for boasting?* which is indeed more animated than our version; but I think, not in the taste and manner of St. Paul, nor does it seem exactly to suit the *original.*

f *Christ*

Christ our passover is sacrified for us.

tirely *a new mass: as ye are* by your Christian profession *unleavened*, let there be no mixture of any thing inconsistent with that simplicity and purity which the gospel teaches. sect. ix. 1 Cor. v. 7.

It is a diligence and resolution that becomes you; *for* we have not only the Divine command to enforce it, but this tender additional obligation, that *even Christ our passover was slain for us*[f]. He hath made his precious blood the price of our redemption, that he might make it the means of our sanctification, and that we instead of being smitten by the sword of the avenging angel, might sit down to a divine banquet in peace. *Let us then keep the* holy *feast* 8 which he has at such an expence provided for us, and in which he feedeth us even with his own flesh; and let us celebrate it in a manner which may do him the greatest honour, and be most pleasing to the adorable Author of our liberty and our happiness; that is, *not with the old* stale *leaven* of uncleanness, so common in your Gentile estate, *nor with the leaven of malignity and mischief*, which your Judaizing teachers would infuse, though it is as inconsistent with the benevolence, as the other with the purity of the gospel: *but* avoiding these with the strictest care, keep it *with the unleavened* [*bread*] *of sincerity and truth:* with the most simple and sincere desire of knowing and practising every branch of our duty; which if we really have, it will keep us from all these evils, and secure an uniformity of behaviour, honourable to our profession, and agreeable to the glorious scheme and design of its illustrious Author.

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators.

In this connection it occurs to me, and I 9 conclude you remember, that *I wrote to you an epistle* which I sent you before your messengers reached me, *that you should not converse with* fornicators and *lewd persons*[g], or others of ill fame

[f] *Christ our passover was slain.* It is well known, that Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, accuses the Jews with having taken out of the book of Esdras the following words, "*The passover is our Saviour, and our refuge.*" L'Enfant thinks these words of St. Paul are an allusion to them.—It is a very inconclusive inference of some from this context, that this *epistle* was written about the time of the *passover*. Compare chap. xvi. 8.

[g] *Lewd persons.*] I have rendered πορνοι, *lewd persons*, in these *verses*, as I think it very plain the *apostle* intended the word should be taken in that extent; his argument concluding yet more strongly against some other species of *lewdness*, than against what is called *simple fornication*, detestable as that is.

[h] *Those*

SECT. IX.

fame and character. *But* I think you must apprehend, that by what I then wrote, I intended *not entirely* to forbid all converse *with the lewd people of this world, or with covetous men, or extortioners, or idolaters*, among your heathen neighbours; *for then*, as these characters so generally prevail among mankind in this degenerate state, *you must indeed go out of the world*, and seek some solitary abode in the wilderness; which is what I never intended to require or encourage. *But* the intent of what I then said, and of what *I have now written unto you*, is, *that if any who is named a* Christian *brother be* evidently *a lewd person, or* remarkably *covetous*, or in acts of occasional, though not stated and customary worship, *an idolater*, or even *a railer*, who labours to provoke others by foul language, and insulting behaviour, or injures any in their absence by slanderous reports, *or a drunkard*, and in any other respects, an abandoned sensualist, *or a* rapacious *extortioner*, *you should not converse* familiarly, *or so much as eat with such an one*, in common life, and much less, in such religious solemnities as are peculiar to the church of Christ, which ought ever to be a pure and holy society.

1 Cor. V. 10. 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 11 But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat.

12 12 You must understand my caution with such a limitation as this: *for what have I to do*, as a Christian apostle, *to judge those that are without* the pale of the church? Of others indeed I may speak; for *do not* even *you*, in your more private capacity, *judge those that are within?* I have taught you, that every private Christian should be concerned in his station to maintain the discipline of the church of Christ, and to bear his testimony against disorderly walkers,

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 which may at present have a place in it. *But* let it be remembered, that *those who are without, God judgeth* [h]; and he will find a way, sooner or later, to testify his awful displeasure against them for crimes which they have committed against the law of nature, and that acquaintance with it which he knows they actually had, or might have attained. *Therefore* in consideration of this, both in one view, and the other, let it be your immediate care, as you regard the

13 But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among your-

h *Those who are without, God judgeth.*] Dr. Whitby thinks this is an oblique reference to the mother-in-law of the incestuous person who was a *heathen*: which, from the *apostle's* giving no directions concerning her, is not improbable. But I think, the views of St. Paul in this clause, were more extensive, and have *paraphrased* them accordingly.

i *Take*

yourselves that wicked person.

the peace of the church, and the safety of your own souls, speedily, and with all due solemnity *to take away from among yourselves the wicked person*[1] I have mentioned, and any others, whose character may, like his, be scandalous and infectious.

SECT. IX.

1 Cor. V. 13.

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY are those churches who have it in their power to exercise *godly discipline*, and to chase from their communion such members as are its reproach and scandal! Happy they, who having this power, have the courage and fidelity to use it, so as not to be ashamed and condemned by it. Let us not be too much surprised, that offences come, and if there are, even in Christian societies, some enormities beyond what are *commonly heard of among the Gentiles*. It is no wonder, if such abandon themselves, yea, if they are in righteous judgment abandoned of God, to the uncontroulable rage of their own lusts and corruptions, and the great enemy of souls be suffered to carry them captive at his pleasure. Let it however be our concern, that when this is the case, *the wicked person be taken away*. And though the extraordinary *power* which the *apostles* had, be long ceased, and we cannot *deliver over* offenders for correction *to Satan*, as they did, let us take such methods as are still open, for *purging the old leaven* out of our churches; and O, that we may be enabled *to purge it out of* our hearts! remembering *Christ our Passover, who was slain for us*, feeding daily upon him by faith, and keeping the sacred festival, at once with joy and gladness, and with simplicity and sincerity of heart.

Ver. 13 — 1 — 5 — 7

Lamentable indeed is it that so many vices should prevail in human nature; that he, who would avoid all society with persons of a bad character, *must needs go out of the world*. But most lamentable of all, that any one who is *called a brother*, should be *a fornicator, or covetous, an idolater, or railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner*. May God preserve us from such detestable crimes, and may he purge out all such spots as these from our feasts of charity! and to that end, may he quicken our zeal to bear a testimony against them, in every such method as suits our relation and circumstances of life! Above all, let not any ever imagine, that being joined in communion with a *Christian church*, can excuse

10 — 11

[1] *Take away*, &c.] This seems plainly to imply that the Corinthians had a power of *excommunication in themselves*, as has generally been pleaded by congregational writers from this text.

SECT. IX. cuse the guilt of such immoral and scandalous practices, for which *the wrath of God comes even upon the children of disobedience* among
13 the heathen. *God* will have his time *to judge them that are without;* and not only *Christians at large*, as some may fondly and perhaps profanely be ready to call themselves, but *Mahometans* and *Pagans* too, shall find articles like these, sitting upon their souls with a dreadful weight, and if sincere repentance do not make way for pardon, plunging them into the lowest abyss of misery, into a state of everlasting separation from the blessed God, and all his holy and acceptable servants.

SECT. X.

The Apostle reproves the Corinthians for prosecuting their brethren in heathen courts; and solemnly warns them of the sad consequences which would attend the indulgence of those criminal dispositions and practices in which Christianity found them, and from which it was intended to deliver them. 1 Cor. VI. 1—11

1 CORINTHIANS VI. 1.

SECT. X. I HAVE already mentioned one very great irregularity among you; and now I am under an unhappy necessity of animadverting upon
1 Cor. VI. 1. another; which is, that you enter into suits of law with each other in heathen courts. And is this possible? *Dare any of you* indeed act so shameful a part? Can you really be so imprudent, *having any matter [of complaint] against another*, as to *refer it to the* decision of men, who lie under so many temptations to be *unjust, and not* of *the saints*[a], of your Christian brethren, from whose sanctity of character and profession you might reasonably expect the most equitable usage, and the utmost tenderness in accommodating differences, upon the easiest
2 terms that justice will allow. *Do you not* yet indeed *know*, have you never been told it by me, or by any other, *that the saints shall* in the great day *judge the world?* that they shall be assessors with Christ in that solemn judgment when he shall condemn all the ungodly? (Compare Matt. xix.

1 Cor. VI. 1.
DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy

a *Unjust—saints.*] The heathen judges, as Paul seems here to insinuate, or rather in effect to declare, were *generally* unjust; Christians were *generally* good, righteous, and holy men. There might be exceptions on each side, but the *apostle's* argument turns on what might commonly be supposed. The saints, who are to judge angels, are not merely professing Christians.—To suppose, that the case of the incestuous Corinthian had been carried before a heathen judge, as Mr. Locke supposes, seems entirely groundless. A thousand other disputes might have occasioned the remonstrance before us.

b *Shall*

unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

xix. 28.) *And if the world is* shortly *to be judged* *by you, are ye unworthy of determining the most inconsiderable matters* which daily occur in your secular affairs? SECT. X. 1 Cor. VI. 2.

3 Know ye not, that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life.

I repeat it again; and you will find it a striking argument, if you will allow yourselves to reflect upon it; *know you not, that we shall judge* even the fallen *angels*[b] themselves, who, notwithstanding all their malignity and pride, shall be brought to that tribunal at which you, having gloriously passed your own trial, shall be seated with Christ, your victorious Lord, when by his righteous sentence he shall send these rebellious spirits to that flaming prison which Divine justice hath prepared for them. *And* [*are ye*] *not* then much more apparently [*worthy to judge*] *the* little trifling *affairs which relate to this* mortal *life? If therefore ye*, who have such great honours and dignities in view, *have*, in the mean time, any little *controversies* with each other, *relating to the affairs of this life, do ye set those to determine them, who are of no esteem at all in the church*[c], but whom ye know to be idolaters, despisers of the gospel, and enemies to your great Master, and his cause, as your heathen neighbours undoubtedly are? *I speak* [*this*] *to your shame*; and hope you blush while you

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

5 I speak to your shame

b *Shall judge angels.*] Had the *apostle*, as Dr. Whitby supposed, referred to the power which many Christians had of driving out *demons* from those who were possessed by them, he would not have spoke of this as a future thing, nor can we suppose it to have been common to *all Christians*, nor would it have afforded an argument equally forcible with that which the *paraphrase* suggests. Mr. *Reynolds* extends the *interpretation* yet farther, and seems to infer from it, that the *holy angels* are still in a state of probation, and shall be rewarded at the last day, according to the degree of their fidelity and activity in the services assigned to them by Christ, as the head of *angels*, who shall take his redeemed from among men, to be assessors with him in that final sentence. *Reyn. of Ang.* p. 183. But the *angelic* legions are represented in quite another view, namely, as ministering to Christ, adding pomp to his appearance, and executing his sentence; which, I think, sufficiently proves that this is an ungrounded interpretation, and that if any such judgment is to pass, with regard to *them*, it must be at some other time, and in some other place. But there seems a peculiar dignity and propriety in this determination of the great God, that when the *devils*, who are expresly said *to be reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day*, shall be condemned, the *saints*, being raised to the seats of glory which these wicked spirits have forfeited and lost, should assist in that sentence which shall display the victory of Christ over them in these his servants, once their captives, and will, no doubt, render the sentence itself yet more intolerable, to creatures of such malignity and pride.

c *Do ye set them*, &c.] Our *translation* renders it, *set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the church*, as if the *apostle* had said, "take the meanest Christian, rather than any heathen." But I follow that preferred by Beza and Whitby. Limborch would understand κριτηρια, as equivalent to δικαστηρια, and render it as a piece of advice, "constitute to yourselves courts of judicature, relating to civil affairs."—*Elsner* shews, that καθιζειν, signifies *to place persons on judicial seats. Observ.* Vol. II. p. 93.

SECT. X.

1 Cor. VI. 5.

you read it. Are things indeed come to such a pass in your church, celebrated as it is, and boasting so much of its wisdom, that this should be necessary? *What is there not one* wise *intelligent person among you* all, *who may be able to determine the cause of a* Christian *brother. But*

6 though the civil constitution allows you to decide these things among yourselves, *one brother hath a suit against another, and this before infidels* [d], who cannot but be greatly scandalized at this, and take occasion from your mutual quarrels and accusations, to brand the whole body of you as injurious and avaricious; who, while you pretend to be so far superior to secular views, are yet so strongly attached to them, that with all your professions of universal benevolence and brotherly love, you cannot forbear wrong-

7 ing one another? *Therefore*, whoever may have the right on his side, on this or that particular question, *even this is altogether a fault among you*, that you bring it under the cognizance of heathens [e] on whatever occasion it be, *that ye have* such law-suits and *contests with each other. Why do ye not rather endure wrong* patiently, and sit down by the loss? *Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded*, than seek such

8 a remedy as this? *But* indeed, to speak plainly, *you do wrong, and* you *defraud even* [*your*] *brethren.* By such proceedings as these, you do much greater injury to the church of Christ, and the common cause of religion, than you can sustain from any particular brother against whom you advance a complaint. Nor is this the only thing wherein you are to blame, nor the only instance in which you injure each other.

9 And permit me to expostulate with you a little on this head, *What!* can you contentedly sacrifice this great and glorious hope which the gospel gives you? With all your boasted knowledge, *do you not indeed know that the unjust shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived*

shame. Is it so, that that there is not a wise man among you? no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another: why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

9 Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters,

d *One brother hath a suit against another,* &c.] Josephus observes, that the Romans, who were now masters of Corinth, permitted the Jews in foreign countries, to decide private affairs, where nothing capital was in question, among themselves; and from hence Dr. Lardner argues the justice of this rebuke of St. Paul, as there is no room to doubt but Christians might have had the same privilege, as they were looked upon as a *Jewish sect. Credibility*, Vol. I. p. 165. But separate from that, they might certainly by mutual consent have chosen their brethren as *referees.*

e *Even this is altogether a fault among you.*] That ἤδη should be rendered *even*, *Raphelius*, hath well observed, and proved. *Annot ex. Herod. in loc.*

ters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind;

ed by a vain imagination, that the Christian name and privileges will secure you in the practice of your vices; for I now solemnly assure you, as I have often done, that *neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate persons*, who give themselves up to a soft indolent way of living, and can endure no hardships in the way of duty and honour; *nor Sodomites*, those infamous degraders of human nature. *Nor thieves, nor* those who are insatiably *covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor rapacious persons*, who by extortion, or any other kind of violence, invade the property of their neighbours; *shall inherit* that pure and peaceful region, *the kingdom of God*, where holiness and love must for ever reign, under the auspicious government of his Son.

SECT. X.

1 Cor. VI. 9.

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

10

11 And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

And while I write this, excuse me, that I think it my duty solemnly, though tenderly, to call you, my dear brethren, to recollect, that *such* detested creatures as these, *were some of you* in your unconverted state! as many of your neighbours know, and as you yourselves, with deep humility and agony of soul confessed. *But ye are washed*, not merely by the baptism of water; *but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified*, Divine grace has made a happy change in your state and temper; and ye are purified and renewed, as well as discharged from the condemnation to which ye were justly obnoxious, *in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of* him whom we are now taught, through that common Saviour, to call with complacency *our God*. You ought therefore ever to maintain the most grateful sense of this important blessing, to stand at the remotest distance from sin, and to be tender of the peace and honour of a society which God hath founded by his extraordinary interposition, and into which he hath been pleased in so wonderful a manner to bring even you, who were once in the most infamous and deplorable state.

11

IMPROVEMENT.

Alas! How great a reproach do we bring on our Christian profession, by so immoderate an attachment to our secular interest! How much does the family of our common Father suffer, while *brother goes to law with brother!* What are these little interests of moral life, that the heirs of salvation, *by whom angels*

Ver. 6

8

are

SECT. X.

are to be judged, should wrangle about them, and for the sake of them do wrong, and that *even to their brethren !*

Ver. Men had need, where such a temper prevails to examine themselves, and take heed that they *be not deceived ;* for though good
9 men may fall into some degrees of this evil, through negligence or mistake, yet certainly it looks too much like the character of such of whom the apostle testifies, that *they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Let us observe, that in this catalogue are con-
9,10 tained, not only the most infamous and enormous offenders, but some, who perhaps may be tempted, because of their freedom from flagitious crimes, to think much better of themselves than they ought. We find here the *effeminate*, and *covetous*, and *revilers*, and *extortioners*, ranked with *adulterers*, and *fornicators*, with *thieves and drunkards*, with *idolaters and Sodomites.* We can never be secure from danger of falling into the greatest sins, till we learn to guard against the least ; or rather, till we think *no* evil small ; viewing every sin in its contradiction to the nature of God, and in the sad aspect it wears with regard to an eternal state.

But how astonishing is it to reflect, that when the apostle is speaking of persons of such infamous characters, he should be able to add, in his address to his Christian brethren at Corinth,
11 *And such were some of you !* Who must not adore the riches and sovereignty of Divine grace ? were such as these the best of the heathen world ? were such as these prepared by their distinguished virtues to receive farther assistance ? let us rather pay our homage to that grace, which went, as it were, into the suburbs of hell, to gather from thence citizens of heaven. And let the worst of men learn, not to despair of salvation, when made sincerely desirous of being *washed* and *sanctified*, as well as *justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.* It is that *name*, it is that *Spirit* alone, which accomplishes works like *these. And* blessed be God, all the wonders of this kind were not exhausted in those early ages, but some have been reserved for us, *on whom the end of the world is come;* the *gospel* hath exerted its triumphs in our own days, and they shall be renewed in those of our children. Only let none from hence presume to turn the grace of God into wantonness ; lest instead of being among the *few*, who are made the trophies of the Divine mercy, they should perish with the multitude of the ungodly world, who die in their pollutions, and go down to final and irreversible condemnation.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

Whereas some among the newly-converted Corinthians, might not be sufficiently sensible of the enormity of the sin of fornication, the Apostle, after some useful reflections on things really indifferent, expresses himself strongly on that head, and pleads those views peculiar to Christianity, which especially illustrate the heinousness of it. 1 Cor. VI. 12, *to the end.*

1 Cor. VI. 12. ALL things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1 CORINTHIANS VI. 12.

SECT. XI. 1 Cor. VI. 12.

I KNOW, some of you at Corinth, allow yourselves to philosophize with great liberty, and find many excuses for doing things which others conscientiously scruple: but as matters at present stand, I think it necessary to give you some cautions upon this head. Suppose the things in question to be as indifferent in their own nature, as many of you would fain persuade yourselves and others, they are: I will, for argument sake, grant, that *all* these *things are lawful for me; but* at the same time you must acknowledge, if you reflect ever so little, that *all* such *things are not convenient:* circumstances may make it improper for me to do that which is not absolutely and universally criminal. And though it be allowed, that *all things* in question *are lawful for me, nevertheless, I will not be brought under the power of any* such *thing.* But am solicitous to maintain such a superiority to appetite and passion, as becomes a man and a Christian in these cases. This maxim may particularly be applied to the supposed difference between one kind of food and another. All *meats,* capable of ministering to our nourishment, [*are*] indifferently made *for the* use of the *belly, and the belly* is made *for* receiving and digesting *meats.* It is true; *but* then it ought to be remembered, that the time will quickly come, when *God will destroy both it and them;* meats, and the organs by which they have been received, and this animal frame, which has been nourished by them, shall be mixed together in the grave, and moulder into dust. Since therefore they refer only to this mortal body, so soon to be reduced to its first mean principles, it is certainly beneath the dignity of the Christian character, to be a slave to this or that kind of

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. 13

SECT. XI.

of meat; or in any instances, to indulge this perishing flesh, so as to injure the souls of others, or hazard our own.

1 Cor. VI. 13. *But* if any man extend the maxim I have mentioned above, to patronize any kind of lewdness, it would be a groundless and most unjustifiable inference: for it is most certain, that *the body is not* made *for* so infamous a purpose as *fornication*, nor can the commission of it be ever necessary or expedient; *but* it was, on the contrary, formed *for* the service of *the Lord*, that, while we continue in it, we might devote all our animal, as well as rational powers, to our great Creator and Redeemer; *and the Lord* is in an important sense *for the body*, he is the great Saviour of the body, as well as of the soul, and will make it at last appear, that he hath not forgotten the meaner part of our nature, in the gracious scheme he hath formed for our felicity:

14 *And* this scheme shall surely be effectual; for *God* the Father *hath both raised up the Lord*, Jesus Christ, from the dead to an immortal life, *and will also raise us up*, in like manner, *by his* Divine and almighty *power*, and transform these bodies of ours, into a resemblance of the glorified body of our Lord; which should certainly raise us above all impure affections and desires, and engage us to live in the body, in some conformity to so divine and glorious a hope.

15 Enter, I beseech you, into the thought; and let me expostulate freely with those who are ready to forget it. *Know ye not* indeed, *that*, as *your bodies* make an essential part of yourselves, they *are* to be considered as *members of Christ*, belonging, as it were, to his body, and in that view under his care, as to their final and everlasting happiness with him. *Shall I then take* these which I am taught to look upon as in an important sense *the members of Christ, and* prostitute them to so infamous a purpose, as to *make them the members of an harlot* by unlawful embraces? *God forbid!* It is a thing not to be thought of, without the utmost abhorrence and indignation.

16 *What, know ye not, that he who is* thus *joined to an harlot, is one body* with her? *For say* [*the Divine oracles,*] speaking of that conjunction which whoredom prostitutes to the dishonour of matrimony, so wisely and graciously ordained by God, (Gen. ii. 24,) *they two*, that is, the man and his wife, *shall be one flesh.*

them. Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

15 Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

16 What, know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot, is one body? for two (saith he,) shall be one flesh.

But

17 But he this at joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.

But on the other hand, *he that is joined to the Lord* by a true faith, *is one spirit* with him. And as the head and members of the natural body are one, as they are acted upon by the same spirit, so the same Divine and holy Spirit, which lives in Christ as the Head, is communicated to us from him; just as the vital spirits are communicated from the head to the limbs. Now what thought can be more monstrous than that any one should think of being, at the same time, one spirit with the Lord, and one flesh with an harlot? Let this therefore be instead of ten thousand arguments, to engage you to *flee whoredom:* concerning which, one may farther plead, that *every* [*other*] *sin, which a man practises, is without the body;* its effects fall not so directly upon the body, but often more immediately upon the mind [a]. *But he that committeth whoredom*, or any kind of lewdness, *sinneth* particularly *against his own body* [b], not only polluting and debasing it, by making it one with so infamous a creature, but perhaps infecting and enfeebling, wasting and consuming it, which these vices, when grown habitual and frequent, have an apparent tendency to effect. (Compare Prov. v. 11; Job xxxvi. 14.) There is also another view, in which the baseness of this crime must appear to you Christians, in consequence of your relation to that blessed agent, the Spirit of God. Have you not all been baptized in his name, and instructed in your relation to him? *What, know you not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost*, which is *in you*, dedicated to him, and inhabited by him; even that spirit *which you receive of God* as his most valuable gift? *And*, on the whole, in whatever view you consider yourselves, it will appear, that *ye are not* by any means *your own* property, nor can be justly at your own disposal, to

SECT xi.

1 Cor. VI. 17.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth, is without the body: but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body.

18

19 What, know ye, not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.

19

a *Every* [*other*] *sin*, &c.] It would be unreasonable to insist on the most rigorous interpretation of these words; but the *general* sense is plain and true, and I suppose, that on the whole, there is no other sin by which the body receives equal detriment, considering not only its nature, but how much it has prevailed.

b *He that committeth whoredom, sinneth against his own body.*] This is well illustrated by a fine passage of Xenophon, produced by Raphelius here, in which Socrates is represented as saying, "that intemperate men hurt themselves far more than others; whereas other sinners secure some profit to themselves, though they are injurious to others."—It is evident, that πορνια, must here signify *any unlawful commerce between persons of different sexes*, since *whoredom* with married women is as directly contrary both to the honour and health of the body, as with single.

SECT. XI.

to seek your present gratification without controul, or regard to the will of a superior.

1 Cor. VI. 20. *For* the contrary is most apparent; *ye are bought with a price*, and that infinitely beyond what you can pretend to be worth. *Therefore*, far from doing any thing to bring a dishonour on religion, you ought in every action, word, and sentiment, to own yourselves his property, and exert yourselves to the utmost, in a course of vigorous and constant obedience, to *glorify God*, both *with your body and with your spirit, which are*, by the justest title, *God's*; as he hath not only created, preserved, and maintained you, but by the invaluable blood of his Son purchased and redeemed you to himself, and by his holy Spirit taken possession of you, and marked you for his own.

20 For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

IMPROVEMENT.

How peculiar is the excellence of the *Christian* religion! With what incomparable advantages doth it inforce all the lessons of moral virtue, which it teaches! With what holy disdain should we look on the baits of sense, and *the pollutions which are in the*
Ver. *world through lust*, if we seriously and often reflected on these two
15 things—That *our bodies are the members of Christ, and that they*
19 *are the temples of the Holy Ghost!* Let it be our care, that they may not only be nominally, but really so. That we may by a
17 living faith be united to the Lord, so as to become *one spirit with him*, animated by that Spirit which resides in him and dwells in all who are truly his.

Let us, as often as we are tempted to alienate ourselves from the service of God, reflect upon *the price with which we are bought.*
20 How great, how important a price, which we should never think of but with secret shame, as well as admiration and love! O Lord! hast thou paid such a ransom for me, and shall I act as if I thought even this not enough? as if thou hadst acquired only a partial and imperfect right to me, and I might divide myself between thee and strangers, between thee and thine enemies? O may we be entirely thine! and make it the business of the latest day and hour of our lives, *to glorify God with our bodies* and *with our spirits, which are his!*

Under the influence of this thought, may we effectually enter into the wise and pious suggestions of the *apostle;* and guard, not
12 only against things absolutely and universally *unlawful*, but likewise against those, which, in present circumstances, may be *inconvenient.*

convenient. May we be ever ready to exert a holy freedom of soul, and a superiority to whatever may ensnare and enslave us; which we shall more easily obtain, if we reflect on the transitory duration of the objects of appetite and sense: how soon the things we enjoy, and those bodies by which we enjoy them, shall be reduced to the dust, out of which they were taken. God destroys all that is present and visible, that we may *look* more intensely *for a kingdom that cannot be moved.* He reduces our bodies to putrefaction, that we may learn to cultivate with greater care the interest of a never-dying soul: which if we faithfully and diligently pursue, *God who hath raised up his Son* as our Surety and Saviour, *will also raise* us up by his own power, to enjoyments, sublime, incorruptible, and eternal. *O Lord! we would wait for thy salvation, and* in the mean while, would *do thy commandments;* and animated by so exalted a hope, would *purify ourselves, even as thou art pure.*

SECT. XI.

Ver. 13

14

END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

E. BAINES, PRINTER, LEEDS.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building